

PR
2976
J1856

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



THIS BOOK IS ONE OF A
COLLECTION MADE BY
BENNO LOEWY

1854-1919

AND BEQUEATHED TO
CORNELL UNIVERSITY

DATE DUE

~~MAY 20 1966 M P~~

~~NOV 24 1968 P~~

~~DEC 17 1971 M P~~

~~MAY 17 1974 M~~

~~MAR 9 1985~~

~~NOV 1985~~

~~JUN 2 1998~~

~~OCT 31 2004~~

~~MAY 22 2007~~

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

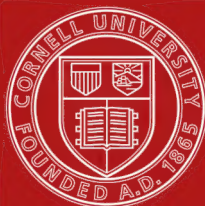
Cornell University Library
PR 2976.J18S6

Shakespeare diversions, second series, fr



3 1924 013 157 411

olin



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.



SHAKSPEARE DIVERSIONS

SECOND SERIES

FROM DOGBERRY TO HAMLET

BY

FRANCIS JACOX B.A.

AUTHOR OF 'CUES FROM ALL QUARTERS,' 'ASPECTS OF AUTHORSHIP,' ETC.

LONDON

DALDY, ISBISTER, & CO.

56, LUDGATE HILL

1877

✂

PR
2976
J18S6

Ä 550585

Looney

CONTENTS.


CHAPTER I.—*Dogberry* :

	PAGE
§ I.	I
§ II. CIRCUMLOCUTORY AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL . . .	14
§ III. A FELLOW THAT HATH HAD LOSSES . . .	21
§ IV. WRIT DOWN AN ASS	28

CHAPTER II.—*Leontes and Hermione* :

§ I. LEONTES	43
§ II. HERMIONE LOST AND LAMENTED . . .	53
§ III. HERMIONE REVIVED AND REGAINED . . .	62

CHAPTER III.—*Othello and Desdemona* :

§ I. OTHELLO	73	
§ II. DESDEMONA	82	
§ III. OTHELLO'S ONLY WITCHCRAFT	92	
§ IV. OTHELLO'S STORY OF HIS LIFE	107	
§ V. OTHELLO'S SOLDIERLY SIMPLICITY OF SPEECH .	115	
§ VI. LIFE ONLY IN ANOTHER LIFE	121	
§ VII. PUTTING OUT THE LIGHT OF LIFE	129	
§ VIII. A LOVING LIFE ON DYING LIPS	132	
§ IX. PENAL SENTENCE OF LIFE, NOT DEATH . . .	139	

CHAPTER IV.—*Materia Medica*:

	PAGE
§ I. PHYSICKED IN VAIN	147
§ II. 'THROW PHYSIC TO THE DOGS'	155
§ III. METAPHYSICAL MALADY AND PHYSICAL ART	166
§ IV. THE APOTHECARY OF MANTUA	175
§ V. A DEADLY DOCTOR	182
§ VI. DYING OF AN UNTOLD DISEASE	189

CHAPTER V.—*Friar Laurence* 195CHAPTER VI.—*From Dining upon Air to Dancing on it*:

§ I. TANTALIZING TABLE-TALK	210
§ II. STRANGE BEDFELLOWS OF MISFORTUNE'S MAKING	233
§ III. THE COLOUR TEST OF GUILT	239
§ IV. DENTAL DEMONSTRATION	247
§ V. A ROPE FOR THE DROWNING; OR, RESERVED FOR THE HANGMAN	253

CHAPTER VII.—*Polonius*:

§ I. 	259
§ II. PATERNAL ADVICE TO LAERTES	266
§ III. HOLDING FAST BY ONE'S OLD FAST FRIENDS	275
§ IV. IN FOR A FIGHT, AND HOW TO GET OUT OF IT	287
§ V. CHARACTER BETOKENED BY DRESS	294
§ VI. OBTRUSIVE ART	315
§ VII. AN INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY AND A PLIGHTED HEAD	331
§ VIII. POLONIUS ACCOUNTED A GOOD ACTOR	336

CHAPTER VIII.—*Hamlet*:

§ I. THE PLAY OF HAMLET	342
§ II. THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET	348
§ III. HAMLET'S SIMULATED MADNESS	365
§ IV. HAMLET AND OPHELIA	372

CHAPTER IX.—*Hamlet's Kinsfolk and Friends:*

	PAGE
§ I. THE GHOST	385
§ II. CLAUDIUS AND GERTRUDE	395
§ III. HORATIO	402
§ IV. ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN	413

CHAPTER X.—*Hamlet and the Players:*

§ I.	434
§ II. 'THE PLAY'S THE THING'	448
§ III. THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY	451
§ IV. STAGE TEARS FOR HECUBA	454

CHAPTER XI.—*Breaking up and Broken off:*

§ I. LIFE'S LAST WORDS CUT SHORT BY DEATH	473
§ II. THE CURTAIN FALLS UPON THE FALLEN DEAD	482

INDEX	491
-----------------	-----

FROM DOGBERRY TO HAMLET.

CHAPTER I.

Dogberry.

§ I.

M. PHILARÉTE CHASLES tells us, in one of the numerous references to Shakspeare scattered throughout his voluminous *Etudes de Littérature Comparée*, that among the many comic personages with whom "that Molière-Æschylus" has peopled his world, he, the French critic, chiefly admires "ce magistrat subalterne, bon petit juge de paix, excellent homme, qui se nomme Dogberry." Coleridge regards the same dignitary as no creature of the day, to disappear with the day, but the representative and abstract of truth which must ever be true, and of humour which must ever be humorous. Elsewhere he remarks that as in Homer all the deities are in armour, even Venus, so in Shakspeare all the characters are strong, —real folly and dulness being made the vehicles of wisdom. There is no difficulty for one being a fool to imitate a fool; but to be, remain, and speak like a wise man and a great wit, and yet so as to give a vivid representation of a veritable fool,—*hic labor, hoc opus est*. "A drunken constable is not uncommon, nor hard to draw; but see and examine what goes to make up a Dogberry."

Elbow, in *Measure for Measure*, is tarred, or painted, with

the same brush ; but the master constable of Vienna comes not near him of Messina, in specific gravity and matter for mirth. He emulates him, however, in the use and abuse of big words ; as where he brings in before Angelo and Escalus, to have summary justice done upon them, "two notorious benefactors," "void of all profanation in the world that good Christians ought to have ;" and where he cites the testimony of his wife, "whom I detest before heaven and your honour," etc. ; and where he denounces the loose-living tapster, Pompey, and his belongings : "First, an it like you, the house is a respected house ; next, this is a respected fellow ; and his mistress is a respected woman." Also, when this poor duke's constable is a man to warrant the ironical note of exclamation of Escalus, "Here's a wise officer !" and his subsequent note of interrogation, "How long have you been in this place of constable ? . . . You say seven years together ? . . . They do you wrong to put you so oft upon't. Are there not men in your ward sufficient to serve it ?" "Faith, sir," replies Elbow, "few of any wit in such matters." Master constable knows his worth. The Dogberry dynasty are generally proficient in self-appreciation. They are like Mr. Pepys's "my Lord Mayor" (in 1663), that "bragging, buffle-headed fellow, who would be thought to have led all the City," etc., "while I am confident there is no man almost in the City cares for him, nor hath he brains to outwit any ordinary tradesman." But then was not Dogberry himself openly called, if not formally (and to his wish) written down, an ass ?

Let us glance here and there at some of the stolid officials, justicers, constables, and the like, in miscellaneous literature, who, in some one point or more, remind us of Dogberry. Such as that justice in *The Coxcomb* of Beaumont and Fletcher, who "has surfeited of geese, and they have put him into a fit of justice," and who opens the proceedings thoroughly in Dogberry's style : "Accuse them, sir ; I command you to lay down accusations against these persons, in behalf of the state, and first look upon the parties to be accused, and deliver your name." Having

listened to the accuser's brief statement, the worshipful magistrate exclaims,

"No more ! we need no more : sirrah, be drawing

Their mittimus before we hear their answer.

What say you, sir ? are you guilty of this murther ?

Mes. No, sir.

Just. Whether you are or no, confess ; it will be the better for you."

And so he goes on, in the same strain of strained justice. The "warden" of Maidenhead, before whom Thomas Elwood, Milton's reader, was taken for Sunday, or rather for Sabbath day, travelling, figures in Elwood's narrative as a British Dogberry, dogged and dogmatical : the accused pleaded that the Sabbath was the seventh day, and that Sunday, not Saturday, was at present in question. "Here the younger constable, whose name was Cherry, interposing, said, 'Mr. Warden, the gentleman is right as to that, for this is the first day of the week, not the seventh.' This the old warden took in dudgeon, and looking severely on the constable, said, 'What ! do you take upon you to teach me ? I'll have you know I'll not be taught by you.' " Master constable junior mildly and deprecatingly rejoins that Saturday is the seventh day, and that yesterday was Saturday. "This made the warden hot and testy,"—but the result was a diversion in favour of Elwood, who got off, after being heavily lectured by the mouthing magnate on the Fourth Commandment, and menaced with the stocks for his alleged breach of it. This dignitary seems to have been near of kin to the "individual" Dr. Boyd tells us of, who dispensed justice from a seedy little bench with most imposing airs and awful state—sitting upon that bench, all alone, and with never a case of the smallest importance coming before him ; yet when expressing his opinion, he never failed to state that "the Court" thought so and so. Farquhar's Justice Scale and Balance * are both tarred with the same brush. The fussy

* Not forgetting Justice Scruple and the Constable. The latter is asked by Sergeant Kite, Pray, who are those honourable gentlemen upon

importance of Foote's Heeltap resembles that of Messina's head watchman, diction included; as for instance, "Silence! and let us proceed, neighbours, with all the decency and confusion usual upon these occasions." "Silence there, and keep the peace: what, is there no respect paid to authority? Am not I the returning officer?" "Let us now open the præmunire of the thing, which I shall do briefly, with all the loquacity possible." "D'ye consider, neighbours, the weight of this office? Why, it is a burden for the back of a porter." Hood's country constable, Master Goff, is worthy to have fraternized with Verges, Hugh Oatcake, and George Seacoal: his physique and phiz would do no dishonour to neighbour Dogberry's distinguished self: it was certainly no superabundance of brain that made his two heavy eyes with their lids protrude from their sockets like two well-poached eggs, except that in the place of the yolks there were two globes of the dull greenish brown of a fowl's gizzard; his nose was absolutely devoid of character or meaning, a mere mushroom-button; while his mouth, round and open, reminded one irresistibly of a silly fish making itself up to take a minnow. "Ponder intensely as he liked, with such a face he could only appear to be going to sleep with his eyes open." That justice should be provided with such a doltish auxiliary is but consonant with history from the days of mythology downwards, so notorious has justice been for "playing at blindman's-buff, at which game, with a fillet before her eyes, she must take the first she can lay her hands on. . . . Thus the sagacious Peter Goff had been thrown in her way when she was groping about in the dark for a constable,—an injudicious mode of selection, by the way, almost equal to pricking for sheriffs with the eyes wide open." This straggler behind the march of intellect was in his own

the bench? and answers: "He in the middle is Justice Balance, he on the right is Justice Scale, and he on the left is Justice Scruple; and I am Mr. Constable: four very honest gentlemen"—to the last of whom, whatever Dogberry may have said, reading and writing come *not* by nature, nor by attainment of any kind.

conceit a grenadier striding at its head. But "there are no bounds to human vanity; it is one of those features which it is impossible to caricature." The favourite theme of Goff's flourishes was his own astuteness; and this assumption made him particularly jealous of any attempt to bestow information upon him.*

Describing the England of Elizabethan times, Mr. Froude remarks, in the first chapter of his History, that in that country every unknown face was challenged and examined—if the account given was insufficient, he was brought before the justice. "For any man found at large, and unable to give a sufficient account of himself, there were the ever-ready parish stocks or town gaol." Equally ever-ready, there was master constable Dogberry, transferred from rural England to Sicily by our Warwickshire poet. It is likely that Shakspeare in his native county, as well as in the capital city where he made a name and a fortune, had as often been more amused than awed by the local watch, the constabulary force of Seacoals and Oatcakes, as Young

* Descendants in a direct line from Shakspeare's master constable, are the Bumbles of Beadledom. The Bumble of *Oliver Twist* is seen to "smile as men smile who are conscious of superior information." Hardly a tale or a volume of miscellanies by Dickens but has its fling at the Beadle. In one of his latest books he said of that functionary with unrelenting intolerance, that if there is anything that is not to be tolerated on any terms, anything that is a type of jack-in-office insolence and absurdity, anything that represents in coats, waistcoats, and big sticks, our English holding-on by nonsense, after every one has found it out, it is the beadle.

Swift's P. P., Clerk of the Parish, combines the functions of beadle with his own, so far as to be systematically severe in whipping forth dogs from the temple, and proceeding "even to moroseness" in tearing from "poor babes" the half-eaten apples which they privily munched in church. Leigh Hunt's beadle snatches an apple from such a boy, and looks blacker than ever when he finds it is a bad one. But what popular writer has not taken the popular side against the beadle? down to Mr. Thackeray, at least, with his fling at

"The beadles to whip the bad little boys
Over their poor little corduroys,
In service-time, when they *didn't* make a noise."

Edinburgh used to be by the so-called "Town Rats" of Auld Reekie—the dilapidated Town Guard, with their dingy uniform, cocked hats, and Lochaber axes—worn-out old Highlanders for the most part, who were, *ex officio*, an unfailing subject of mirth to the citizens, and, testifies Dr. Robert Chambers, "could hardly be considered as of any practical utility." London's old Charlies, of watch-box renown, were about on a par with them, perhaps, as a body of police. The Cockney force could show a Verges for the Heart of Mid-Lothian's Dogberry, a southern Seacoal for a northern Oatcake. Mr. Pepys, as we have seen, had once to do with a Lord Mayor of the Dogberry order; and so had he, in later life (1668), with a humbler specimen, more nearly of the Verges and Seacoal status: "We had like to have met with a stop for all night at the Constable's watch at Moor-gate by a pragmatistical Constable"—alongside of which passage from the Diary there might be placed a parallel from Wordsworth's experience, whose, and whose companions'

"steadiness of face
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
To their inventive humour, by stern looks,
And questions in authoritative tone
From some staid guardian of the public peace,
In his suspicious wisdom."

The watch at Dogberry's direction were to "comprehend all vagrom men," and to bid any man whatever stand in the prince's name. How if he would not stand? "Why, then take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave." So Dogberry disposes of the man that, by hypothesis, will not stand, and of the hypothesis itself as propounded by one of his company. And even so is he ready to dispose of any number of similar hypotheses, touching contingent cases, which some of the watch, to do them justice, are equally ready to put. All the drunken men they find at the ale-houses, for instance, he has directed them to bid go to bed. "How if they will not?" the same

starter of hypothetical hitches and contingent cases is anxious to be informed. Another of his conditional queries is, If we know a man to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him? (an inquiry of undying interest in ticket-of-leave days). Another is, when Verges instructs his fellow-watchmen if they hear a child cry in the night, to call to the nurse, and bid her still it,—“How, if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us?” There are people who delight in mooted points after this sort, whether or not there be a Dogberry at hand to determine them. The late Dr. Norman Macleod, during his Eastern travels, fell in with “a most agreeable American,” whose old experiences of danger and difficulty had become so familiar a habit of mind, that he could not see the extreme oddness of some of the questions he put to his reverend companion, with the utmost gravity and earnestness; as, for example: “What would you do, Doctor, supposing that in a small room a man rose up to shoot you?” This difficulty the Doctor confessed had never occurred to him. Or, again, after a few meditative whiffs, the questioner would suggest another query: “What would you do, Doctor, supposing you were crossing a prairie, and a villain on horseback threw his lasso at you, and fixed it, say, over your body? Remember, he won’t miss; and if he succeeds in dragging you off your horse, and along the ground, you are a dead man.” In vain the Glasgow divine conjectured what he, or even a Moderator of the General Assembly, or one of the Bench of Bishops, would do on such an occasion, by means of any “motion” he was likely to construct or propose. Maggie Tulliver was similarly given to start such wild hypotheses to her brother Tom, in the *Mill on the Floss*: “If there came a lion roaring at me”—“How can a lion come roaring at you, you silly thing? There’s no lions, only in the shows.” “No; but if we were in the lion countries—I mean in Africa,”—“Well, I should get a gun and shoot him.” “But if you hadn’t got a gun, . . . What should you do, Tom?” Tom paused, and at last turned away contemptuously, saying, “But the lion *isn’t* coming. What’s

the use of talking?" "But I like to fancy how it would be," said Maggie, following him: "Just think what you would do, Tom." "O don't bother, Maggie! you're such a silly—I shall go and see my rabbits."

In the thirty-fourth number of the *Examiner*, Swift satirized those who *will* put wild improbable cases to show the reasonableness and necessity of resisting the legislative power in imaginary junctures; than which nothing, he contends, could be more idle; for he would undertake in any system of government, either speculative or practical, that was ever yet in the world, from Plato's Republic to Harrington's Oceana, to put such difficulties as cannot be answered.

In his explanatory comments upon an Essay by Kant, which goes to show that, although the people have no shadow of a right to enforce their rights, yet still they *have* some rights, De Quincey represents the Königsberg philosopher as teaching that if the monarch—be his name what it may, king or senate—will not grant these rights, then they are to tell him, "by means of a free press," that really he acts in a very disagreeable kind of way.—But what if he refuse to allow them a free press, (this being the one sole resource conceded to the people?)—Why, in that case, they are to wait till he takes a more transcendental view of the question.

Readers of Plutarch—if there be any such old-fashioned folks still extant—may remember his story of the stranger that questioned Geradas as to the Spartan law against a certain class of criminals, and who being assured there were no such criminals in Sparta, rejoined, "But what if there should be one?" Or again, the poser put by Titus Annius to Tiberius Gracchus, who was too much puzzled to reply. Or the persistency of Nasica in demanding to know what Blossius of Cumæ would have done, if the Tiberius afore-said had ordered him to burn the capital,—every evasion of Blossius, on the plea that Tiberius would never have given him such an order, being futile; for the importunate Nasica was not to be so put by.

Dr. Johnson, who, as Macaulay says, "hated to be questioned," must have been unwontedly good-humoured the day he suffered Boswell to ply him with queries starting from the standpoint, "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Boswell was fond of propounding such questions, and often got very properly snubbed for his pains. As a rule, Johnson had no mind to play Dogberry to Bozzy's Oatcake. The Doctor preferred siding with the Judges, when they decline to lay down the law on hypothetical cases—though with them too there are historical exceptions, as when the whole twelve of them were asked a conjectural question in 1616, touching the royal prerogative, and all at once gave an affirmative answer except Lord Coke, who only said that "when the case happened, he would do that which should become an honest and just judge." Wellington made the same sort of answer to a leading question, or series of questions, put at the Congress of Verona (1822): "Not being in a situation to form a judgment on the hypothetical case put, it was impossible for him to answer any of the questions." It is quite absurd to put imaginary cases, and raise questions what should be done under such and such circumstances, wrote Bishop Copleston to Archbishop Whately, touching matters ecclesiastical, in 1845: "When the time for doubt comes, then let us ascertain the doubtful point," etc.—But our illustrations are becoming as "vagrom" as the men Dogberry desired to be "comprehended," and it is more than time to have done with them. As the Frenchman said when told that his wife had given birth to twins, "We must put a stop to this."

Back, then, to Dogberry, but only for the sake of a glance at his relations with the venerable Verges. Dogberry likes to have all the talk; but Verges is fond of the sound of his own tongue too, and master constable patronizingly tolerates and apologises for that weakness on the part of his ancient friend:

"Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man,

sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest, as the skin between his brows. . . . A good old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out; God help us! it is a world to see!—Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges:—well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind:—An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshipped: All men are not alike; alas, good neighbour!

Leonato. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogberry. Gifts that God gives."

Something of the like self-complacency, and the same deprecating tone of apology, characterizes Launcelot Gobbo, in the *Merchant of Venice*, when impatient to be heard himself, and patronizingly patient of his aged sire's craving to be heard too, by Signor Bassanio:

"In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father."

The innkeeper's wife, in *Joseph Andrews*, prays Mr. Pounce to pardon her husband, "who was a very nonsense man. . . . She was sure he never intended any harm; and if it was not for that block-head of his own, the man in some things was well enough."

One of Miss Broughton's novels presents to us an aged pair in a country cottage: the dame, dried and pickled into an active cleanly old mummy,—her goodman, dressed in an ancient smock-frock, and with both knotted hands clasped on the top of an old oak staff. *He* is evidently childish, and breaks out now and then into a feeble laugh, at the thought, maybe, of some dead old pothouse jest. "This poor ould person is quoitie aimless," says his wife with dispassionate apology; "but what can you expect at noinety-one?" Her own years cannot be much fewer. "He's very fatiguin' on toimes—that he is!" she continues, eyeing him with contemplative candour. But her sense of superiority is self-supporting, and she can put up with the old man, and hopes others will do so too.

Then again there is George Eliot's old parish clerk, Mr.

Macer, whom we see at the Rainbow, holding his white head on one side, and twirling his thumbs with an air of complacency, slightly seasoned with criticism; and whom we hear referring in terms of patronizing forbearance to the old rector, Mr. Drumlow, "poor old gentleman. I was fond on him, though he'd got a bit confused in his head," etc. Mr. Dickens' Father of the Marshalsea condescended towards his brother as an amiable, well-meaning man; a private character, who had not arrived at distinction. We see the brothers walk up and down the College-yard together; Mr. Dorrit "courtly, condescending, and benevolently conscious of a position;" affably accommodating his step to the shuffle of his brother, not proud in his superiority, but considerate of that poor creature, bearing with him, and breathing toleration of his infirmities in every little puff of cigar smoke that issued from his lips. "The Father of the Marshalsea glanced at a passing Collegian with whom he was on friendly terms, as who should say, 'An enfeebled old man, this; but he is my brother, sir, my brother, and the voice of Nature is potent.'" Even in his last illness, when too weak to raise his hand, he still "protects" his brother according to his long usage, and fifty times a day complacently says, when he sees him standing by his bed, "My good Frederick, sit down. You are very feeble indeed." Exactly the same had been his style towards his pet pensioner, old Nandy, on whose infirmities and failings he would expatiate with such a relish, as if he were a gracious keeper, making a running commentary on the decline of the harmless animal he exhibited.—Another example in another direction may be found in Codlin apologizing for his partner Short: "I ask the gentleman's pardon on your account, as a giddy chap that likes to hear himself talk, and don't much care what he talks about, so that he does talk." In the same story there is an aged sexton, whose work is done for him by a deaf man, a little his senior, but much more active; and whenever the superior exchanges a word with the subordinate about his work, he does so with an impatient kind of pity for his infirmity, as if he were himself the strongest and heartiest

man alive.* Then again we might refer to Mr. Walden-garver, in *Great Expectations*, smiling at Pip, as much as to say (of the man at his knees), "a faithful dependant—I overlook his folly."† And to Mr. Morgan, in *Pendennis*, blandly and forbearingly correcting the imperfect diction of his friend Lightfoot, when the latter has just offered his "candig apinium" about Blanche Amory: "Apinion, not apinium, Lightfoot, my good fellow," Mr. Morgan says with parental kindness. For that gentleman's gentleman is a superior person; and in the *Caxtoniana* we are told (in Lyttonian capitals) of the Superior Person, that when he speaks of a great man, it is with a delicate benignity, an exquisite indulgent compassion, that attests his own superiority. To him the veteran hero is "my poor old friend;" the rising statesman is "that clever young fellow—as times go." Mr. Hardy's tranter, in *Under the Greenwood Tree*,

* Sharp and severe were the strictures incurred by Lord Campbell, when he "discovered that Lord Denman was too old for his office" of Lord Chief Justice. "Lord Campbell urged so forcibly upon everybody the decline in his friend's powers, that people who had not perceived it before began to think it must be so." Miss Martineau, in the *Daily News*, reported a previous stroke of the same kind in the case of Lord Plunket, as Chancellor of Ireland, when he declined to make room for Plain John. "The ministerial newspapers then presented paragraphs about his age and infirmities." In 1849 they "began to bewail Lord Denman's weight of years," and early in 1850 his sprightly comrade succeeded him as C.J. "When the spectators who saw him take his seat for the first time remarked on the 'green old age' of the vivacious Judge, they asked one another, with mirth like his own, who would ever be able to persuade him that he was too old for office."—*Biographical Sketches* by H. Martineau, pp. 244, 249, 252.

† For another illustration from another story from the same pen, take the poor little crazed old lady in *Bleak House*, who keeps on apologizing to her visitors for the eccentricity of her landlord, Krook: "She shook her head a great many times, and tapped her forehead with her finger, to express to us that we must have the goodness to excuse him, 'For he is a little—you know—M—!' said the old lady, with great stateliness. The old man overheard, and laughed." The interview ends with her seeing her visitors out, and informing them by the way, with the toleration of a superior creature for the infirmities of a common mortal, that her landlord was "a little—M—, you know!"

patronizes Thomas Leaf in presence of the parson, with a tone and in terms not unworthy of the superior of (and self-consciously so very superior to) neighbour Verges: "I hope you'll excuse his looks being so very thin," says the tranter, deprecatingly, turning to the vicar; "'t isn't his fault, poor feller. He's rather silly by nater, and could never get fat. . . . He's very clever for a silly chap, good-now, sir. You never knowed a young feller keep his smock-frocks so clane; very honest too. His ghastly looks is all there is against en, pore feller; but we can't help our looks, you know, sir." Dogberry's very phrases must have been, whether vaguely or distinctly, within the author's remembrance when he penned this variation upon, if not reproduction of, them. And if the author of *Far from the Madding Crowd* makes us laugh at his rustics, it is with the laughter that, according to Mr. Carlyle, means sympathy; for good laughter is not the "crackling of thorns under the pot;" and even at stupidity and pretension Shakspeare does not laugh otherwise than genially. "Dogberry and Verges tickle our very hearts; and we dismiss them covered with explosions of laughter; but we like the poor fellows only the better for our laughter; and hope they will get on well there, and continue Presidents of the City-watch." Some experts in the art of writing fiction apparently fail to understand that the tiresomeness of a bore ought to annoy only the other persons of the story, not the reader of it. Dogberry and Shallow, for example, as a shrewd critic has remarked, impress us with a strong conviction that if we were doomed to live with them, life would be a dreary burden; but as readers or spectators we find them infinitely amusing.

§ II.

CIRCUMLOCUTORY AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL.

Much Ado about Nothing, Act iii., Sc. 5 ; Act v., Sc. 1.

HARD work has Leonato, in one scene, and Don Pedro in a later one, to bring Dogberry to the point, and to learn his meaning or master his message. The President of the Watch is circumlocutory and circumstantial exceedingly. Leonato desiderates despatch when the deputation waits on his worship. "Brief, I pray you ; for you see, 'tis a busy time with me." Dogberry and Verges have no notion of brevity as the soul of wit, or as the salt of business. *They* are in no hurry. They can talk about a subject, and about it, and all round about it, to any extent. "Neighbours, you are tedious," is a rebuke that hurts not Dogberry ; he is too pachydermatous for that : indeed he takes it for a compliment, for he has yet to learn what tediousness means ; and truly, for his part, if he were as tedious as a king, he could find it in his heart to bestow it all on so worshipful a man as Leonato. "I would fain know what you have to say," is Leonato's next appeal. And "I must leave you" comes soon after. "This learned constable is too cunning to be understood," the Prince says of him, after that comprehensive summarization by Dogberry of the charges against Conrade and Borachio, which from a secondarily jumps to a sixthly and lastly, thence to a thirdly, and so "to conclude." We have already cited Elbow in *Measure for Measure* as a duller, paler sort of Dogberry ; and he is true to the likeness as a master of arts circumlocutory and circumstantial : Escalus finds him and Pompey the tapster as egregious a pair of "tedious fools" as Leonato found Dogberry and Verges.

How to tell a plain story in a few words, is a problem beyond the capacity, and perhaps below the contempt, of dignitaries like him of Messina. We may take him as a type of those who, as narrators or expositors, seem to find it equally hard to make a proper beginning and to come ever to an end. They will not be content to start from the real

starting-point, but must be allowed a wide margin of preliminary matter. If they know not when to stop, neither do they where to begin. They have no fancy for being denied their antediluvian licence ; to be called on to "pass on to the deluge" is at once to them a perplexity and an affront. Thomas Prince's *Chronological History of New England* begins with Adam, and has to work down five thousand six hundred and twenty-four years before he gets to the Pilgrim Fathers and the Mayflower. He is a representative man in that respect. Not Homer, but one of the cyclic poets derided by Horace, (*Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri*, etc.,) began an account of the Trojan war with the nativity of Helen, or the story of Leda and the eggs. "Arrive au drame," exclaims Balzac's not too good listener, Emile, when the Raphael of *La Peau de Chagrin* wears out his patience with proem and prelude : "Tu est ennuyeux comme un amendement qui se développe." And Raphael promises compliance with a grace, by passing over the first seventeen years of his eventful life. The Geta of Terence, in the *Phormio*, is a model for professors of condensed narrative when he says,

"Omitto proloqui ; nam nihil ad hanc rem est, Antipho."

Baron Alderson explained the secret of his getting on so fast in trying cases, to be this,—“discarding all the fudge and nonsense of the case, and coming to the real point.” Buffon complained of Androvandus, that in writing the history of the cock and the bull, he tells you all that has ever been said of cocks and bulls ; all that the ancients have thought or imagined with regard to their virtues, character, and courage ; all the things for which they have been employed ; all the tales that old women tell of them ; all the miracles that have been wrought upon or by them in different religions ; all the superstitions regarding them ; all the comparisons that poets have made with them ; all the attributes that certain nations have accorded them ; all the representations that have been made of them by hieroglyphics or in heraldry ; in a word, all the histories and all the fables with which we are acquainted on the subject of cocks and

bulls. At the high school of Patak, when Kazinezy (part of the time) was there, one of the professors who lectured on universal history, that Hungarian scholar tells us, took eighteen years to make his way to the end of the third century. Professor Dragg's History of Religion gets a chapter to itself in *The Doctor*, where Southey* relates how the Professor set about reading his book aloud one evening at Copet, to Madame de Staël and her circle of literati: "It began at the beginning of the world, and did not pass to the Deluge with the rapidity which Dandin required from the pleader in Racine's comedy:" age after age rolled away over the Professor's tongue, the course of which seemed to be interminable, especially to Necker's daughter, who "could tolerate nothing that was dry, except her father;" and who looked wistfully round, and saw upon many a face a semi-suppressed yawn, but upon that of Dumont the impress of sound sleep. The Professor, it appears, went steadily on; Dumont slept audibly; the Professor was deaf to every sound but that of his own voice, and Madame was in despair. The Professor coming to the end of an eloquent chapter, declaimed with great force and vehemence the emphatic close, and prepared to begin the next. Just in that interstice of time, Dumont stirred and snorted. Madame de Staël seized the opportunity; she clapped her hands, and ejaculated, "Mon Dieu! voyez Dumont! il a dormi pendant deux siècles!" Dumont opened his eyes, and Professor Dragg closed his manuscript.†

* Who, by the way, some eighty chapters later in his work, particularly advises all intending readers to "begin at the beginning, or more accurately speaking, at the seventh chapter before the beginning," etc.—*The Doctor* chap. clx.

† Mr. Peacock, in *Gryll Grange*, discourses feelingly on the post-prandial inflictions of long-winded bores. A great Indian reformer he describes, for instance, who began in the Punjaub, travelled to Calcutta, went southward, got into the Temple of Juggernaut, went southward again, and after holding forth for more than an hour, paused for a moment—like Professor Dragg. The man who sat next him attempted to speak; but the proser clapped him on the arm, and said, "Excuse me: now I come to Madras." On which his neighbour jumped up and vanished. "Another went on in the same way about currency. His first hour's

Ephraim Jenkinson begged pardon of the Vicar of Wakefield for straying from the question, when he had expatiated for a while on the medley of opinions broached by Sancho-niathon, Manetho, Berosus, and Ocellus Lucanus, upon the creation of the world; and straying from the question he certainly was, for, says Dr. Primrose, "I could not for my life see how the creation of the world had anything to do with the business I was talking of." It is entered among the curiosities of literature that the false Berosus opens his history before the flood, the Chaldeans having, by his account, throughout preceding ages faithfully preserved their historical vouchers. "A des endroits un peu moins antédiluviens," says Sainte-Beuve of Nodier's *Elements de Linguistique*, "nous nous sentirions plus à même de prendre parti." Not every one can be expected to follow a Dubartas poetizing the *Création du Monde*, and making of his poem a veritable encyclopædia, the topics of which range from the fixed stars to the minutest insect, while it blends, with what M. Demogeot calls an "incroyable emphase," the cosmogony of the Bible with that of Ovid. Most of the earlier Chronicles being intended by their monkish compilers to be each a universal history for the instruction of the brotherhood, they rarely begin lower, observes Dean Milman, than the Creation or the Deluge. Reviewing the *Eulogium Historiarum* as one of a class very common in mediæval literature, Mr. Freeman explains that a learned monk who wished to make a universal history for the benefit of himself or his brethren, began at the Creation and went on to his own time: his account of his own times, as being a contemporary record, always had some value; if he was an able man, and had good means of information, of course it had very great value. "But his account of earlier matters, has, in the nature of the case, no value at all." The author of the *Eulogium*

talking carried him just through the Restriction Act of ninety-seven. As we had then more than half a century before us, I took my departure."—*Gryll Grange*, chap. xix.

runs up and down, from nation to nation, and from subject to subject. "He begins, to be sure, at the beginning with the Creation, and immediately debates whether the heaven or the earth were created first." And Professor (Daniel) Wilson, in his *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, takes occasion to remind us that Scottish historians have not always been content to set out from a period as early as that presented by archæology. Wyntoun begins with a history of the Angels before proceeding to "Mannes creationne," and only settles down to "the oryginale cronikill of Scotland" after reaching the "spate of Noe" in his sixth chapter.

Already, more than once, we have directly referred or indirectly alluded to the celebrated injunction in Racine touching the "spate of Noe." *Passons au déluge*, suggested Dandin, with a yawn, when L'Intimé began his oration *avant la naissance du monde*. Prior's metaphysical poem on the Progress of the Mind contains a reference to a certain lady who kindly talked to the poet at least three hours,—

"Described our pre-existing station
Before this vile terrene creation ;
And, lest I should be wearied, madam,
To cut things short, came down to Adam ;
From whence, as fast as she was able,
She drowns the world, and builds up Babel."

Manetho, says Bolingbroke, in one of his letters on the Study of History, "began his history, God knows when, from the progress of Isis, or some other as well-ascertained period." Accomplished St. John would persuade his disciple to "hasten down from the broken traditions of antiquity" to ages more modern. So, again, Sir George Cornwall Lewis took a preference for the dim and indefinite portions of history to imply generally a sacrifice of the interests of the reader to the reputation of the writer. Well known to fame, and by some still revered as model and example, is the erudite German who began his history of all the libraries of the world by a lengthy and learned chapter *De Bibliothecis Antediluvianis*. Readers of M.

Carlyle's great history may remember a footnote reference to Wuttke's "Seizure of Silesia by Friedrich" (*Besitzergreifung von Schlesien*), and the weariful comment, or warning, "Wuttke begins at the Creation of the World." Wuttke resembles the Pomeranians who, disputing the dues of their pastor, indited a memorial which began with the condition of their parish long before the introduction of Christianity. There is nothing like beginning at the beginning, even if one has to wait a very considerable time before nearing the end. But this mode of telling a story may be exhaustive in more than one sense—exhausting the reader, as well as the subject. Giraldus, seven hundred years back, asked, with what is nowadays deemed praiseworthy scepticism, how the Irish could have preserved the records of the events which happened in Ireland before the Flood. Mr. Fleming's work upon Animal Plagues contains one marvellous record: "B.C. 2048 (A.M. 2820) an epidemy and epizooty in Ireland;" and his reviewers sympathized with him in deploring that the chronology of the Irish epizooties up to the Christian era is "not so well established as one could desire." So again in the case of Dr. D. G. F. Macdonald's book on Cattle, Deer, and Sheep, critics supposed it to be vain to hope that any writer of his calibre will ever understand that the history of herds and flocks before the days of the patriarchs may be dispensed with. "Though it may not be generally known that 'the native country of the ox, reckoning from the time of the Flood, was the plain of Ararat,' most readers will forgive the omission of such archæological information." Forgive it as readily as Mildred would Guendolen's intervention in Mr. Browning's tragedy, when she

"work'd such prodigies as sparing her
Lord Mertoun's pedigree before the flood."

According to Judge Haliburton, the lawyers of the United States give the court no credit for knowing something: their arguments assume the form of dissertations;

they begin at the beginning with fundamental principles that everybody knows and can dispense with hearing, and then trace the law, with all its branches, down to the point at issue, where they ought to have commenced. But it almost takes a Shakspeare to avow, as in the Prologue to *Troilus and Cressida*,

“that our play
Leaps o’er the vaunt and firstlings of these broils,
’Ginning in the middle.”

Sancho’s prolix and circumstantial story of the fisherman and the goats, made Don Quixote thankful that literally it had no end, for otherwise there seemed no ending it; and the knight’s interpolated appeals to the squire to eschew irrelevant details, only tended to spin out the length of the tale. Fielding’s Allworthy was fain to desire the elder Partridge to pretermitt his own experiences in Ireland: “Well, pass that over till you return to England. . . . Pray, do not be so particular; I have heard nothing of your son yet,”—and it was of the son that Allworthy wanted to hear. *Mais laissons, cher Osmin, les discours superflus*, as the Grand Vizier says in Racine. So, in Molière, protests Silvestre to Octave, “Si vous n’abnégez ce récit, nous en voilà pour jusqu’à demain.” In Landor’s imaginary conversation between Don Ferdinand and Don John-Mary-Luis, the former has repeatedly to check the impatience of the latter with such correctives as “Gently; we are not half through it yet.” After a while Don John metaphorically expresses his fear that they are still far from land, and have many tacks to make before they reach the port; but this time the other Don’s tone is encouraging: “Have courage, my brother and cousin, we are half-sea—over.” Landor’s never acted, not to say never read, play of *Fra Rupert*, may give us a versified and diversified parallel, in the scene where Butello begins reading from the ceremonious commencement, the Pope’s missive, and is interrupted by Rupert with a

“Well, well;
That is all phrase and froth; dip in the spoon

A little deeper ; we shall come at last
To the sweet solids and the racy wine.

Butello. Patience, good Frate, patience !

Rupert. Now, Butello,
If I cried patience, wouldst thou not believe
I meant delay ? So do not cry it then.
Read on . . . about the middle. That will do."

§ III.

A FELLOW THAT HATH HAD LOSSES.

Much Ado about Nothing, Act iv., Sc. 2.

SIR WALTER SCOTT somewhere remarks that when honest Dogberry sums up and recites all the claims which he had to respectability, and which, as he opined, ought to have exempted him from the injurious appellation conferred on him by Master Gentleman Conrade, it is noteworthy that he lays not more stress even upon his double gown, or upon his being "a pretty piece of flesh as any in Messina," or even upon the conclusive argument of his being "a rich fellow enough," than upon his being *one that hath had losses*.—"Yes, I have gained my experience," is the complacent rejoinder of Jaques to Rosalind's expression of pity for him as having sold his own lands, to see other men's,—with this result, to have seen much, and to have nothing. Crabbe's decayed merchant cherishes a very present pride in past losses :

"His failing is avow'd ;
He of the cause that made him poor is proud ;
Proud of his greatness, of the sums he spent,
And honours shown him wheresoe'er he went.
. . . Now to the paupers who about him stand,
He tells of wonders by his bounty plann'd,—
Tells of his traffic, where his vessels sail'd,
And what a trade he drove—before he fail'd ;
Then what a failure, not a paltry sum,
Like a mean trader, but for half a plum."

Geoffrey Crayon's little Hallum the collector is proud of his intimacy with a broken-down gentleman who had run through a fortune of forty thousand pounds left him by his father, and ten thousand pounds, the marriage portion of his wife: he "seemed to consider it an indubitable sign of gentle blood as well as of lofty spirit to be able to squander such enormous sums." Turner's early acquaintance, the imposing Mr. Tomkinson, used to boast in his retirement somewhere out of the Portland Road that he had "had losses, go to"—he had lost, in his line—pianoforte making—some thirty thousand pounds; he had lost more money in business than any one else had ever lost. Peregrine Pickle's acquaintance within the walls of the Fleet prison comprised one officer, two underwriters, three projectors, an alchemist, an attorney, a parson, a brace of poets, a baronet, and a Knight of the Bath; and of these, no man scrupled to own the nature of the debt for which he was confined, unless it happened to be some twopenny-halfpenny affair; but, on the contrary, boasted of the importance of the sum as a circumstance that implied his having been a person of consequence in life. "I have served Prince Florizel, and, in my time, wore three-pile (best velvet)," quoth Autolycus; "but now I am out of service." "Let's shake our heads," proposes Flavius, in *Timon of Athens*, "and say, We have seen better days."* Travellers in Spain tell us that in

* Balzac's Madame Vauquer, in *Le Père Goriot*, "resemblait à toutes les femmes qui ont eu des malheurs." "Oh, those dreadful women that have seen better days," groans Mrs. Oliphant's Archdeacon Beverley: "It is hard to know how to get one's self into sympathy with those faded existences." They fill him with an infinite pity; but then what can one do? If one tries to recall them to the past, it sounds like mockery—and if one speaks of the present, it wounds their feelings. Dickens makes his Mrs. Fielding "very genteel and patronizing indeed," on the strength of having once been better off. Hers was a family, she would tell all comers, which, although reduced in purse, had some pretensions to gentility; and if certain circumstances, not wholly unconnected, she would go so far as to say, with the Indigo Trade, had happened differently, she might have been in possession of wealth. Mrs. Wilfer is a more intolerable harper!

every town or village there at which you halt, your equipage is sure to be surrounded by silent, moody men, wrapped in striped blankets or tattered cloaks, and with shabby hats slouched over their brows, who regard you with glances that are sad, but not fierce: their aspect is thoroughly faded, but they have a quiet resigned mien, not wholly destitute of dignity. One such tatterdemalion is singled out for our notice by the author of *Under the Sun*,—a broken-down Castilian who seems to say: "I am destitute, but still I am a Don. Poverty is not a crime. I involve myself in my virtue, and have puffed prosperity away. I am bankrupt, but it was through being security for a friend. I am Don Dogberry, and have had losses. I held shares in the Filibusters' Company (limited). The Company is being wound up, and another call on the contributories will be made the day after to-morrow. If you like to give me half a peseta, you can."

The poor Chevalier de St. Louis who sold *patés* at Versailles, begirt with a clean linen bib and apron, but with his croix set in gold tied by its red riband to his button-hole, won the pity of Sterne, in his sentimental journey, and finished the scene with winning his esteem too. *London Labour and the London Poor* has its pictures of an old woman who kept a street oyster-stall (before the days dawned for oysters to be dear), who "had seen better days," and liked it to be known; and of that "young man, of superior appearance,"* the son of a captain in

on the same chord, and tries even Mr. Boffin's good-nature with her acidulated droppings of reference to reduced circumstances and coming down in the world. One would think, by her grand style, she had sounded the depths of the saying in Plautus,

"Miserum isthuc verbum et pessimum est,
Habuisse et nihil habere."

* Like the Mr. Undecimus Scott of the *Three Clerks*, after his face became pimply and his wardrobe seedy, and his sphere of action was confined to Ems and Hamburg, where he poked his "Honourable" card in every one's way, and lugged Lord Gaberlunzie into all conversations. Perhaps the consolation presumably felt by such fast young men, who

the Guards, but now a street patterer; and again of that "clergyman of the Established Church" who now sold stereographic cards in the street.

Thackeray's Mrs. Prior, like most landladies, had seen better days: her husband had been, in happier times, an officer in the militia; then of Diss, in Norfolk, of no profession; then of Norwich Castle, a prisoner for debt, and so on, and so on, until, swimming out of a hundred shipwrecks, he had clambered on to a lighter, as it were, and was clerk to a coal-merchant, by the riverside. He might pair off with that other "captain" in *Philip*, the landlady's father in Thornhaugh Street, Captain Gunn, who, however he might have come by the rank, had borne it so long and gallantly that there was no use in any longer questioning his title to it; and whom the wags could always, as the phrase is, "draw," by speaking of Waterloo, or of battles in general: his club was at the Admiral Byng, where he met frequently a pleasant little society, and bragged unceasingly about his former prosperity. So again the old Sedleys, in *Vanity Fair*, their author thinks, were not unhappy in their fallen estate: perhaps they were a little prouder in their downfall than in their greatness. Mrs. Sedley was always a great person for her landlady, Mrs. Clapp, when she descended and passed many hours with her in the basement or ornamented kitchen, and edified her listener with revelations touching her former household, when she had Sambo and a coachman, and a groom, and a footboy, and a housekeeper with a regiment of female domestics. We are credibly assured that the true pleasure of life is to live with your inferiors; and besides very great persons, the people whom Fate has specially endowed with this kindly consolation, are those who have seen what are called better days—those who have had losses. When Aunt Honey-

resemble such a slow coach as Dogberry only in having "had losses," may be best conceived by slightly parodying two lines of the laureate's, and so to make them sing or say,

"'Tis better to have lived and *lost*
Than never to have lived at all."

man, in *The Newcomes*, came to have losses of money, Fortune straightway compensated her by many kindnesses which no income can supply. She made all around her feel her rank of gentlewoman; she made them all familiar with the clerical position of her father, so much respected in his parish and so famous for his port wine.* She would talk of her "misfortunes" with amusing equanimity; as if her father's parsonage house had been a palace of splendour, and the one-horse chaise (with the lamps for evenings) from which she had descended, a noble equipage. The good lady was called the Duchess by her tradesfolk; and, "knowing her station, she was kind to those inferior beings." She patronized her butcher, a man of property, who would say of her sometimes, "Law bless the old Duchess, she do make as much of a pound of veal-cutlet as some would of a score of bullocks; but you see she's a lady born and a lady bred;—she's seen better days, you know." It was believed by these worthy folks that her father had been a Bishop at the very least; and the better days which she had known were supposed to signify some almost unearthly prosperity. "Depuis le renversement de notre maison" . . . Mademoiselle de Scudéry *disait toujours*; and in such a tone, and with such an air, that the *malin* Tallemant des Réaux observed, "Vous diriez qu'elle parle du bouleversement de l'Empire grec." Susan Nipper's pertness provoked Mrs. Pipchin to exclaim, "How dare you talk in this way to a gentlewoman who has seen better days?" To which Miss Nipper rejoined that she pitied the better days that had seen Mrs. Pipchin; and that, for her part, she considered the worst days in the year to be about that lady's mark, except that they were much too good for her. The old women in Mrs. Whitney's *Hitherto*, supported by charity, have a constant theme of rivalry in the number and severity of past misfortunes, this one having a tale to

* Fielding's Goody Seagrim makes it her vaunt that, poor as she is, she is a gentlewoman, "thof I was obliged, as my father, who was a clergyman, died worse than nothing, to undervalue myself by marrying a poor man," Black George to wit.

tell of better days, when her husband sailed an India ship for rich owners, and she lived in a pretty two-storey house in a sea-coast village, "with carpets to all the floors, and white curtains to the windows, and real china in the closet;" and she perhaps carried the palm; though not one of the sisterhood but would claim, we may suppose, the sort of appearance that struck Gabor in Werner—though Gabor qualifies his reflection by a sad-hearted query:

"He seems
To have seen better days,—as who has not
Who has seen yesterday?"

Smollett's surgeon's first mate of the *Thunder*, in *Roderick Random*, honest Mr. Morgan, insists on being treated by the second mate with the more deference and respect for that "I have, in my time (look you) been a man of some weight and substance and consideration, and have kept house and home, and paid scot and lot and the king's taxes." And later in the book he addresses himself to the captain as "a shentleman porn and pred," who "has had misfortunes, Got help me, in the world." Scott's aged ex-abbot, now turned gardener, maunders about the time when he was great, and had his mule and ambling palfrey at command. His Mr. Crosbie, in *Redgauntlet*, makes a boast of what he has "done and suffered in the Forty-five. I reckon the Highlandmen did me damage to the amount of one hundred pounds Scots, forby all they ate and drank." He bestows his tediousness, Dogberry-like, on Alan Fairford, in resuming this strain before they part: "I carried arms, sir, against the Pretender, . . . and I had an especial loss of a hundred pounds"—"Scots," interrupted Fairford: "You forget you told me all this before." "Scots or English, it was too much for me to lose," rejoined the Provost.—"I have been at feasts, I have even given them," brags George Meredith's Jack Raikes at the cricket-club dinner—"yes, gentlemen," (sliding suddenly down the slope of anti-climax,) "you must not judge by the hat, as I see one or two here do me the favour to do"—and anon we

have him lapsing into a lament for the squandering of property bequeathed to him by his respected uncle.

The head of the family of Mr. Lever's Daltons was listened to with wondering admiration as he told of the life he used to lead, and the style he once kept up at Mount Dalton:—These were his favourite topics; and, as he grew older, he seemed to find a kind of consolation in contrasting all the hard rubs of present adversity with his pristine splendour.

Mr. Bounderby, in *Hard Times*, exalts his Mrs. Sparsit as "a born lady, who has had her own marriage misfortunes to the tune of tens of thousands of pounds—tens of Thousands of Pounds," he repeats with great relish. So again Mr. Pell, in an earlier work from the same deft hand, exalts Mrs. Pell as "a splendid woman—highly connected too; her mother's brother, gentlemen, failed for eight hundred pounds, as a Law Stationer." One inhabitant of the Almshouse in Crabbe's *Borough* is a garrulous old widow, to whose poor friends 'twas now her pride to tell on what a height she stood before she fell;

"At church she points to one tall seat, and 'There
We sat,' she cries, 'when my papa was Mayor.'
Not quite correct in what she now relates,
She alters persons, and she forges dates;
And finding memory's weaker help decay'd,
She boldly calls invention to her aid."

Another such inmate, of the other sex, is Benbow, that boon companion, long approved by jovial sets:

"Still some conceit will Benbow's mind inflate,
Poor as he is,—'tis pleasant to relate
The joys he once possess'd—it soothes his present state."

§ IV.

WRIT DOWN AN ASS.

Conrade. Off, coxcomb !

Dogberry. God's my life, where's the sexton ? Let him write down the prince's officer, coxcomb !—Come, bind them :—Thou naughty varlet !

Conrade. Away ! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogberry. Dost thou not suspect my place ? Dost thou not suspect my years ?—O that he were here to write me down—an ass !—but, masters, remember, that I am an ass ; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. . . . Bring him away. O that I had been writ down—an ass !”

Much Ado about Nothing, Act iv., Sc. 2.

ASININE aspiration though it be, Dogberry is very fervent in it. He has been called an ass twice over, to his heart's content, by one of the two culprits he has just succeeded in “comprehending.” But he would fain see so incredible a contempt of the prince's officer set down in black and white. Scarce can he believe his ears. He to be called an ass,—he, of all men ? Called it to his face, called it twice over, called it without qualification or reserve ? The sexton should have been on the spot this night, of all nights in the year, with his writing capacity and his writing materials. Why was that potential scribe out of reach, that he might then and there record the unparalleled affront, that he might then and there book it, for the prince and for posterity to read,—that he might then and there write down Dogberry an ass ?

The asinine aspiration arose out of the apprehension of Conrade and Boracchio by the watch. The young bloods thought and spoke foul scorn of the old watchmen who took hold of them. It was an antedated version of the nightly collisions in Georgian London of the veteran watch-box Charleys, of pre-Peelite days, with the night-revellers and young men about town. Dogberry had a pronounced fellow-feeling for those somnolent seniors in his tenderness to a sleepy temperament. Having instructed the watch to make no noise in the streets,—for, babbling and talking on

their part, "is most tolerable and not to be endured,"—the sprightliest of them cordially acquiesces: "We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch." "Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman," neighbour Dogberry approvingly rejoins; "for I cannot see how sleeping should offend."* It was the man

* Mr. Fonblanque, in the *Examiner* of 1829, described London's ancient Charleys of watchbox renown, as a parochial police, which had slumbered and snored from the age of Alfred down to that of Peel. It was in vigorous defence of the scheme for a New Police that he added: "If the thieves of Alfred had descended to us of the same dozing character as the watchmen, we might have allowed the fitness of means to objects; but few arts under Providence, have improved more wonderfully than the ancient art of thieving, which, next to the profession of the law, is exercised by the sharpest wits in the country." Wherefore he contended that the parochial police being no longer a match for the predatory adepts, it had become necessary to substitute a new and more capable organization for the public protection.

Here and there an old-fashioned obstructive print stuck up for the decrepid parish watchmen as though to the strain of "Charley is my darling." And their Christian namesake, Charles Lamb, found it in that large Christian heart of his to say a good word, in rather stately rhyme too, for at least one member of the force,—but then it was by way of translation from the Latin of Vincent Bourne, who had written complimentary verses addressed to David Cook, of the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, watchman. David was duly (or unduly) complimented on his courage, as a guardian of the peace during the witching hours of night:

"The tales of ghosts which old wives' ears drink up,
The drunkard reeling home from tavern cup,
Nor prowling robber, thy firm soul appal;
Arm'd with thy faithful staff, thou slight'st them all."

But rare was the scribe who had a good word to say for the old watchmen who are reckoned to have gone out with oil-lamps, the Duke of Wellington's ministry, and the Bourbon family. "In the days of our youth," writes one living reminiscent, "we used to beat these Charleys, to appropriate their rattles, to suspend them in mid-air, like Mahomet's coffin, in their watch-boxes." Peter Pindar has his fling in more than one heroic poem at the Old Police:

"Lull'd was each street of London to repose,
Save where it echoed to a watchman's nose;
Or where a watchman, with ear-piercing rattle,
Roused his brave brothers from each box to battle;
To fall upon the Cynthias of the night,"—

who could not see this, and who was head-constable withal, that a strayed reveller and spark like Conrade called an ass. To have had that enormity written down,—what would not Dogberry have given for that ! To see A double S booked against his name and office ! Calling him it was

a picture to which a parallel might be cited from Barry Cornwall's story of a rake's progress :

" Foul songs are met by fouler jibes ; mad screams by curses bold ;
Till even the drowsy watchman wakes, and—claims his bribe in gold."

Dr. Wolcot's Academic Ode proclaims the pride of the Old Charleys in their stentorian lungs, aided, on occasion, by a rattling obligato, or an obligato of the rattle :

" Nay, watchmen deem their merits no way small,
Proud of a loud, clear, melancholy bawl ;
Nay, proud, too, of that instrument the rattle,
Which draws the hobbling brotherhood to battle."

Their bark was apt to be worse than their bite ; and indeed, in more than one respect (though not in being dumb dogs that cannot bark) they resembled the brotherhood denounced by the Hebrew prophet, whose "watchmen are blind ; they are all ignorant ; . . . sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber." Death's ramble, as recounted by Thomas Hood, comprises this incident of the rambler's variegated observation :

" He saw a watchman fast in his box, and he gave a snore infernal ;
Said Death, ' He may keep his breath, for his sleep can never be more eternal.'"

And this poet's contempt of the hobbling brotherhood finds vent in another poem, his Tale of a Trumpet, where the old woman that sets up for a witch gets no more "credit for greater might Than the powers of darkness confer at night

On that other old woman, the parish Charley."

Theodore Hook describes the pursuit of a presumed malefactor by "several elderly and decrepit personages," whose natural qualities for the chase were considerably improved by sundry large, long, and thick great-coats, in which their ancient bodies and limbs were completely enveloped, in order to secure them from the cold and rain, to which, as "guardians of the night," they might occasionally be exposed. Horace in London refers to them by the same title, the "guardians of night," in that Ode of his which recites a squabble with them, Horace losing his hat, but his cmoppanion bearing off a lanthorn and rattle. As to their clothing, Herr Doctor Schönbein, in his *Reisetagebuche eines deutschen Naturforschers*, took pains to particularize it as an envelopment of "thick, yellowish-gray gaberdines, prepared of a peculiar kind of woollen stuff, wherein they had a remarkably strange appearance." Their decrepitude might have been glanced at by Scott when he committed his old gaberlunzie, Edie Ochil-

bad enough ; but only let him see it in writing ! *Epea pteroenta* : words are winged ; if not fitted with a ready-made pair, they can, like riches, make unto themselves wings and fly away. But the written word standeth and endureth for ever. *Litera scripta manet*. O, to be but once and for ever writ down an ass !

tree, to the custody of "two poor creatures, neither of them so stout as he was himself," "an aged prisoner led along by decrepit guards." In *Maxwell*, the London "guardians of our lives and property" are depicted as "those venerable, infirm personages, who at that period slept during the night in upright boxes, and moved about occasionally in heavy great-coats, armed with lanterns and sticks for the protection and convenience of themselves." This was written while the new police were still new, though already the remembrance was dying out of a state of things when the protection of life and property was left to such local constables as the parishes chose to appoint,—each parish being expected to take care of itself, and some of them recruiting the watch from the aged paupers in the workhouse, while others did not even go through the form of appointing anybody ; nor is there any reason to suppose, remarks an authority on police, that the parishes which dispensed with constables altogether were in any degree worse protected than those which provided officers of this kind, and boxes for them to sleep in. "The 'Charley' of those days has passed into a byword for drunkenness, imbecility, and corruption. . . . His profound somnolence was his most harmless fault." In this respect they were pretty nearly on a level with the "paralysed old watchmen" described by Dickens as guarding the bodies of the dead by night in city churchyards, year by year, until at last they joined that solemn brotherhood ; and of whom he observes that, saving that they slept below the ground a sounder sleep than even they had ever known above it, and were shut up in another kind of box, their condition can hardly be said to have undergone any material change when they, in turn, were watched themselves. As long ago as when Beaumont and Fletcher wrote *The Coxcomb*, indictments of somnolence were rife against the city watch. "When they take a thief, I'll take Ostend again," exclaims Valentine, who further charges them with drinking opium in their ale,

"And then they sleep
Like tops ; as for their bills, they only serve
To reach down bacon to make rashers on."

Good-natured Gay deals good-naturedly with them in his *Trivia*, or review of the streets of London. But Pope is none too friendly in his couplet in the *Dunciad* on

"A drowsy watchman, that just gives a knock,
And breaks our rest, to tell us what's o'clock."

The closing scene of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* constrains even such a wit as Falstaff to make the avowal, "I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass." * Aguecheek is quick to recognize himself in the "foolish knight" of Olivia's letter: "I knew 'twas I; for many do call me fool!" The Duke in *Measure for Measure* expatiates on Lucio's designation of him as a fool, a madman, and an ass. Bottom the weaver comes to revel in his ass's head. Dromio of Syracuse accepts as true the assertion, "If thou art changed to aught, 'tis to an ass." "'Tis so, I am an ass." And his brother and namesake of Ephesus is equally acquiescent in the succeeding act:

"Antiph. I think, thou art an ass.

Dromio.

Marry, so it doth appear

By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.

I should kick, being kick'd; and being at that pass,

You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass."

And several scenes later again: "I am an ass indeed; you may prove it by my long ears"—lengthened by pulling. But Dogberry is the man for our money in his asinine aspiration. And, look you, he is terribly in earnest, this man. It was no passing spasm, sharp for the moment, but soon over and forgotten, that wrung from him the cry to be writ down—we know what. It was no mere ebullition of a hot and hasty temper,—a thing for him to wonder at and be ashamed of, by next morning. It was the impassioned utterance of a great spirit stirred to its lowest depths. Reflection intensified passion in his case, not abated or deadened it. The fourth act closes with the vehement aspiration, O that he had been writ down—an ass! And we are some way on in the fifth before Dogberry reappears; and this is his style when he does,—appealing, after due conference with the prince and the signors, to those about him: "And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time

* But then, as Mr. Dallas points out, Falstaff by thus laughing at himself, stops the laughter of others; whereas Dogberry's anxiety to be written down an ass, proves his donkeyhood by his utter unconsciousness of it—the crucial test of an irrecoverable ass.

and place shall serve, that I am an ass." Later, again, when Leonato and Antonio have swelled the gathering, Dogberry recurs to his rankling grievance, and emphasizes in a pathetic parenthesis the lamentable lack of a competent scribe to write down the affront at the time. "Moreover, sir, (which, indeed, is not under black and white,) this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me an ass: I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment." Dogberry can prove by the mouths of two or three and more witnesses that he was so called, although it was not then and there writ down. His secretary, the sexton, had not been gone above a minute when the affront was perpetrated. But oh, the pity of it, that the sexton with his inkhorn was not at hand, to write it down upon the spot.

Would it have consoled master constable to know that Cicero, in one celebrated letter to Atticus, wrote himself down a "regular donkey" (*scio me asinum germanum fuisse*)? But then Cicero might not have taken it so well to be writ down one by anybody else, be he Atticus or who he might. The old prophet in the Hebrew scriptures would probably have been the last to appreciate the humour of the maliciously or ignorantly emphasized italics, "And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*." It was the angry monks who misnamed Erasmus Erasinus, "because he had written himself an ass." A proverb of the Rabbis runs, "If thy neighbour call thee ass, put a pack-saddle on thy back,"—that is, go forward to meet the wrong, rather than shirk it. "You have chosen an ass," said Pope Benedict XII., whether in humility or irony, when the suffrages of the Conclave raised to the Pontificate James Fournier, Cistercian and White Abbot. The Holy Father was as outspoken as La Fontaine's miller,—

"Je suis âne, il est vrai ; j'en conviens, je l'avoue."

On the other hand, there are two asses in a later fable of La Fontaine's, who protest against man's prostitution of their august name by applying it to stupid, stolid bipeds,—

“traitant d'âne, quiconque est ignorant, d'esprit lourd, idiot.” One may be allowed to think of Dogberry, with all due deference to master constable, when reading that stanza or versicle in one of Lord Lytton's fables,—

“An ass his feelings has.
And the feelings of this ass, alas,
Were wounded.
He said, tossing his head,
(And the scorn his speech betray'd, loud bray'd,
Resounded)—”

but what he said is neither here nor there, as it was not, oh, that he were writ down one. Boileau is hypothetical on this subject—*oui, d'un âne, Dont le nom seul en soi comprend une satire :*

“Si pour nous réformer, le ciel prudent et sage
De la parole enfin lui permettait l'usage ;
Qu'il pût dire tout haut ce qu'il se dit tout bas,
Ah, Docteur, entre nous, que ne dirait-il pas ?”

But, honey is not for the mouth of an ass, was one of Sancho's pet proverbs ; and to Sancho himself the Don once said, “An ass thou art, an ass thou wilt continue to be, and an ass thou wilt die.” * “I confess, dear sir,” replied Sancho, with a rueful look, and even with *larmes dans la voix*, “that to be a complete ass I want nothing but a tail, and if your worship will be pleased to put me on one, I shall deem it well placed, and will then serve you as your faithful ass all the days I have yet to live.” Sancho thought too well of asses, and was too proud of his skill in braying like one, and being answered by them accordingly, to resent very bitterly the being called one to his face. Asinius Lupus, in

* A German critic, Dr. Gröhne, wrote a paper to show that the expression *Asine*, addressed by Micio to Æschinus in the “*Adelphi*” of Terence, is a strong one ; upon which Dr. Wagner, as a Terentian editor, offers this remark—by some critics derided as puerile : “I appeal to the fathers who occasionally bestow upon their sons the epithet ‘donkey,’ excellence of temper and perfection of manners notwithstanding.”

Ben Jonson, takes to himself the asinine reference in Horace's libel :

Lup. An ass ! I am the ass. You mean me by the ass.

Mec. Prithee, leave braying then.

Hor. If you will needs take it, I cannot with modesty give it from you."

Asinius *will* write himself down an ass. The fool's cap fits him, and the long ears, and wear them he will. In a like frank spirit of epistolary confidence to that of Cicero's to Atticus, writes Alan Fairford to Darsie Latimer respecting his hooded visitor : " At length I began to stand convicted in my own mind, as an ass before the interview, for having expected too much,—an ass during the interview, for having failed to extract the lady's real purpose,—and an especial ass, now that it was over, for thinking so much about it." Smollett's enraged cynic exclaims, " Why didn't nature clap a pair of long ears and a tail upon me, that I might be a real ass, and champ thistles on some common ? " To apply, or misapply, what Menedemus says in Terence,

" in me quidvis harum rerum convenit

Quæ sunt dicta in stultum,—caudex, stipes, asinus, plumbeus."

Like the fool of Ecclesiastes that walketh by the way, he saith to every one that he is a fool. In a different spirit the Caliph Saphah claimed what, says Gibbon, he had, by his Georgian warfare, " deserved—the honourable title of the Ass of Mesopotamia;" for he had been governor of Mesopotamia, and the Arabic proverb praises the courage of that warlike breed of asses who never fly from an enemy. To be written of as an ass of this breed, or anything like it, is not to be written down. Dr. Thomas Brown, in one of his metaphysical discourses, presumes that few of his countrymen can have refrained from smiling, " on reading the simile in which Homer compares one of the most undaunted of his warriors to that ill-used and much-enduring animal, which, by a very common aggravation of injustice, we have first oppressed, and then despised because we have oppressed." Byron shields himself behind Homer when, for rhyme if not

reason, he compares his Don to the animal Dr. Brown avoids naming :

“ Then, like an ass—

(Start not, kind reader ; since great Homer thought

This simile enough for Ajax, Juan

Perhaps may find it better than a new one). ”

Southey preserved on record in *The Doctor* what a certain noble Lord said of a certain county member in the course of an animated debate in the House of Commons, on a subject long since forgotten : “ There stands the honourable Baronet, hesitating between two bundles of opinions.” When was county member more plainly (even by Mr. John Stuart Mill) writ down an ass ? In a letter to Christopher North from one of his fellow-contributors to *Maga*, that pleasant and successful writer, the late James White of Bonchurch, a certain number of the *Noctes* is warmly praised, and the letter-writer then adds : “ After describing the party at Carnegie’s, who did you mean by the ass that, after braying loud enough to deafen Christopher, went braying all over the Borders ? You unconscionable monster, did you mean me ? Vicar of the consolidated livings of Loxley and Bray ! I console myself with thinking it is something to be mentioned in the ‘ *Noctes*,’ though in no higher character than an ass.” Parson Dale had some reason for assuming a personal allusion in Dr. Riccabocca’s impatient yet sententious utterance. : “ *Cospetto*,—he who scrubs the head of an ass, wastes his soap.” “ If you scrubbed mine fifty times over with those enigmatical proverbs of yours,” said the parson, testily, “ you would not make it any the wiser.” It is not every parson that is equal to the feat recorded in Evelyn’s Diary, of a preacher at “ St. Maries, Oxford,” who “ tooke his texte out of the history of Balaam : Num. 22. ‘ Am I not thine Asse ? ’ ” [There was what the historian of the Dutch Republic calls “ whimsical petulance ” in the complaint set up by President Viglius, after too faithfully serving the ends of Philip of Spain, that “ the faithful servant is always a perpetual ass.” Perhaps he regarded himself as like

Issachar, a strong ass crouching down between two or more burdens.

When the counsels of his imperious wife, Bertha, led Adalbert II. of Tuscany into a premature rebellion against Lambert, then (A.D. 900) Emperor, and King of Italy, the Tuscan was defeated ignominiously, and taken prisoner while hiding in a stable. Whereupon Lambert told him, insultingly, "Your haughty wife Bertha prophesied that you would be a king or an ass; lo, you are found like an ass in the stalls among the cattle." The fallen marquis or count loved not such language.* Ass grated on his ears, as a cognate epithet did on those (presumably long ones) of Bishop Foulques, in Soulié's mediæval *roman*: "Le nom d'évêque imbécile sonnait incessamment à l'oreille de Foulques; elle l'excitait comme la clochette attachée à la tête superbement stupide d'un mulet,"—or, say, as the monosyllable flung by Conrade at the head, no less *superbement stupide*, of Dogberry. He was not philosopher enough to herd with the old philosophers who accepted good-humouredly the disparaging terms attached to them by their enemies or rivals; the Epicureans, for instance, as Mr. Peacock observes, acquiescing in the pig, and the Cynics in the dog, while Cleanthes was content to be called the Ass of Zeno, as being alone capable of bearing the burden of the Stoic philosophy. Napoleon in Egypt treated the philosophers who accompanied his expedition—the "scientific characters," Alison styles them—on a strictly equal footing with the asses, whenever the enemy appeared; for the rule was, in that contingency, to huddle together *savans* and asses in the centre, as the only safe place; and no sooner, according to Las Cases, were the Mameluke horse descried, than the word was given, "Form square; artillery to the angles; asses and

* But what if he had been treated on the spot as the Turks treated the monks in Cyprus, in 1823,—for, not content with stabling their horses in the churches, the Ottomans actually saddled and bridled some of these unhappy ecclesiastics, and, forcing them to go on all fours, rode on them in derision, and kept them going, till they—not were ready to, but *did*, drop down dead of fatigue.

savans to the centre." It became a pet jest with the soldiers to call the asses *demi-savans*. General Daumas, in his book on the horses of the Sahara, has a story of a man who applied to an Arab cheik to know whether he had seen an ass which he had lost. The cheik turned to his friends. "Is there any one here who knows not the pleasures of the chase? who has not fearlessly thrown himself into the thicket to lie in wait for the beast of prey," and in going through all the other stirring incidents of Sahara life. One of his listeners replied, "Yes, I am one who has done nothing of the kind, felt nothing of the kind." The cheik then turned to the applicant for an ass, and said, "*There* is the animal you are in quest of; away with him at once."* Possibly Coleridge might have been consigned to the same category by the cheik, for venturing in verses addressed To a Young Ass, to fraternise with him in such terms as these:

"Thou poor despised Forlorn!
I hail thee Brother—spite of the fool's scorn."

Byron had something to say of Coleridge, greatly daring, in this rhyming challenge; as perhaps, in his time, Horace too would have had, but with more good-nature, like that which marks the passage in his *Epistola ad Asellum*,—"Asinoque paternum Cognomen vertas in risum, et fabula fias." Such banter was popular with the ancients; and Landor essayed to imitate both the matter and the manner when he slipped this epigram into one of Aspasia's letters:

"Leave me thy head when thou art dead,
'Speusippus! Prudent farmers say
An ass's skull makes plentiful
The poorest soil; and ours is clay."

Both in verse and prose, indeed, Landor was fond of these asinine allusions, more or less severe. The Bishop of Ancona, during the siege, is made to complain of having had to pay, that very morning, three golden pieces for the head, "think you, of what? an ass!" "The cannibal!" is Father John's *aside*. A distinguished statesman equally

* Les Chevaux du Sahara et les Mœurs du Désert.

obnoxious to Mr. Peacock, was writ down and "writ large" an ass in the Imaginary Conversation between Landor and Southey—special stress being laid on the alleged loudness and dissonance of his voice, the wilfulness and perverseness of his disposition, and his habitude of turning round on a sudden and kicking up behind. But assuredly this was not the peer of whom a witty Premier said, when urged by a common friend to give him the vacant Thistle,—“Better not, I think ; he would eat it.” A Lord Privy Seal contemporary of his amused the French Court by his answer to the question what office he held : “Le Chancelier est le grand sceau (sot) ; moi, je suis le petit sceau d’Angleterre.”* But others besides Englishmen have raised like matter for mirth. The Italian at Vienna, for example, who was telling a lady how long he had been travelling, and who, pronouncing French after the manner of his nation, said : “J’ai été un *âne* à Paris, et un *âne* à Londres, et un *âne* à Rome.” “Mon cher Abbé,” replied the lady, “il paraît que vous avez été un âne partout.”

Manifest and self-convicted ass though Dogberry might be, it is easily conceivable that his bearing and diction might impose on the unwary, and impress them with a sense of sapient authority. The portentous gravity of his mien, and the magniloquent pomp of his phrases, were no doubt efficacious in securing him notice and respect in Messina. He magnified his office. He must have awed some at least of the vulgar. They would descry dignity in his demeanour, and they would, in his own wording of it, “suspect” his placé. O place and greatness !

“Hood an ass with reverend purple,
So you can hide his two ambitious ears,
And he shall pass for a cathedral doctor,”

says Mosca, in Ben Jonson’s *Volpone*. One thinks of Victor Hugo’s allusion to “les bêtes Qui portèrent jadis des

* To the same Minister is attributed the apologetic idiom : “Je voudrais si je coudrais, mais je ne connais pas.”

mitres sur leurs têtes." It has been said of the popular oriental reason that it succumbs to the fascination of solemn externals as the guaranties of truth : it reposes in the ceremonials of wisdom ; a grave countenance, a venerable beard, a priestly costume, are the tests of a correct and capable instructor. So too, nearer home,

" Braid claith lends folk an unco heeze ;
 Maks mony kail-worms butterflees ;
 Gies mony a doctor his degrees,
 For little skaith :
 In short, you may be what you please,
 Wi' guid braid claith."

Burns tells Andro Gouk, " You look big, but lay by hat and wig, and ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value." In church history, ass was a favourite figure of speech with orthodox and heterodox alike. We are constantly lighting upon such words as these of the Cardinal of St. Mark : " An ignorant prince or prelate is but a crowned ass." Luther loved to adorn his frontispieces with caricatures of a pope furnished with a pair of ass's ears.* It was with the connivance of certain priests that " some wretches," as Dean Milman calls them, stole into the church where Savonarola was to preach on Ascension Day (May 4, 1497), and spread an ass's skin as a pulpit-cushion ; or as some accounts have it, placed a dead ass on the preacher's seat. In the Feast of Asses, a select animal of that breed, covered with sacerdotal robes, was gravely conducted to the altar, where service was performed, and the ass supplied with drink and provender at recurrent intervals between profane prayer and praise.

" Why, friend, a golden ass,
 A baubled fool, are sole canonical,
 While pale-cheek'd wisdom and lean-ribbed art
 Are kept in distance at the halbert's point,"—

* " The Papists are all asses," he comprehensively asserts in one of his diatribes, " and will always remain asses. Put them in whatever sauce you please,—boiled, roasted, baked, fried, skinned, hashed, etc., they are always the same asses."

so discourses Marston's hero in *Antonio's Revenge*. To another of John Marston's plays we owe the vigorous line, "What though in velvet cloak, yet still an ape,"—which to some may recall another of Mr. Tennyson's: "Though smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown;" while it suggests a closer parallel in that old historical drama of King Edward III., of dubious authorship:

"Deck an ape
In tissue, and the beauty of the robe
Adds but the greater scorn unto the beast."

But there are those who deem it profaneness and irreverence to call an ape an ape, an ass an ass, if it but wear a monk's cowl on its head, as Coleridge somewhere says. La Fontaine's charlatan has no such compunctious visitings:

"Que l'on m'amène un âne, un âne renforcé,
Je le rendre maître passé,
Et veux qu'il porte la soutane."

The same fabulist's version of the Ass in the Lion's skin, who made the world tremble, till he was found out, closes with a moral on the many folks that *font du bruit* in the world, whose attire and make-up constitute "les trois quarts de leur vaillance." And what is the moral of that other fable of his about the ass that carried relics?

"D'un magistrat ignorant
C'est la robe qu'on salue."

If certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position we style them a judge, writes Swift in his *Tale of a Tub*; nor would it have been like the Dean to omit adding, that even so an apt conjunction of lawn and black satin we entitle a bishop. In Gresset's *L'Abbaye*, "L'âne mitré va se montrer." The oaf in the *Country Inn* is assured, on high authority, "David, you only want a great wig upon your head and a gown upon your shoulders, to make as good a proser as many that we listen to in the pulpit or on the bench."* John Eames tells Lily Dale, touching

* "My lud, there is a great echo in this court," suggested a bronze-browed barrister to a certain judge, who complained that he could not hear his own voice for an overwhelming donkey in full bray just outside.

the head of his office, Sir Raffle Buffle, that there is something imposing about such a man till you're used to it, and can see through it. "Of course it's all padding." Among the bigwigs, and bishops, and cabinet ministers, he fancies that the looking beautiful is the chief part of it. As the British Bibliographer sings :

" Ha, ha, ha, ha, the world doth pass
Most merrily, I'll be sworn,
For many an honest Indian Ass
Goes for a Unicorn."

We read that an ass's head was sold for eighty pieces of silver. Swift declared, in his time, that they had lately been sold ten thousand times dearer, and yet were never more plentiful.

CHAPTER II.

Leontes and Hermione.

§ I.

LEONTES.

UNDISCERNING readers are apt to regard Leontes as merely a white Othello. They may care for him infinitely less, and think him infinitely better off in the long run than he deserves; but they look on him as intended to illustrate the same unhappy disposition as the Moor, and to have found it almost equally fatal. Now, on the other hand, discerning critics recognize at once in the idea of the *Winter's Tale* a genuine jealousy of disposition, and recommend an immediate comparison of it with *Othello*, which Coleridge affirms to be the direct contrast of it in every particular. For jealousy, he observes, is a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well-known and well-defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible, and, he boldly says, "not one of which marks its presence in Othello;"—such are, for instance, an excitability by the most inadequate causes, and an eagerness to catch at proofs; a grossness of conception, and a disposition to degrade the object of the passion by sensual fancies and images; a sense of shame of his own feelings exhibited in a solitary moodiness of humour, and yet from the violence of the passion forced to utter itself, and therefore catching occasions to ease the mind by ambiguities, equivoques, by talking to those who cannot, and who are known not to be able to, understand what is said to them,

—in short, by soliloquy in the form of dialogue,* and hence a confused, broken, and fragmentary manner; and once more, a dread of vulgar ridicule, as distinct from a high sense of honour, or a mistaken sense of duty; and consequent on this, a spirit of selfish vindictiveness. Elsewhere again Coleridge differentiates sharply the “solemn agony of the noble Moor,” as well from the morbid suspiciousness of Leonatus, who is, in other respects, a fine character, as from what he calls “the wretched fishing jealousies of Leontes.” In one of the miscellaneous poems Shakspeare himself has told us that

“where Love reigns, disturbing Jealousy
Doth call himself Affection’s sentinel;
Gives false alarms, suggesteth mutiny,
And in a peaceful hour doth cry, ‘Kill, kill.’”

The sort of jealousy to which Leontes is a prey is stigmatized none too severely by Paulina, when she tells him—and mark the damning significance of the parenthesis—she will not call him tyrant,

“But this most cruel usage of your queen
(Not able to produce more accusation
Than your own weak-hinged fancy), something savours
Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,
Yea, scandalous to the world.”

* For example, the babble with Mamilius—characterized by Coleridge as the king’s “strange loss of self-control in his dialogue with the little boy.” The doting of the father is expressed with characteristic vehemence and effusion; and in some degree it interests us in favour of both. One likes to read, as in one of Walter Savage Landor’s imaginary scenes in *Æschylus*, of such a king as the king of men, Agamemnon, tossing Orestes above his joyous head, and calling him his crown; or, in *Gibbon*, of Attila relaxing from his savage sternness, to greet his youngest boy, *Irnac*, with an eager smile, and pinch his cheek with demonstrative fondness. The misgivings of Leontes are echoed by Schiller’s Philip II., in the scene where that suspiciously-disposed despot toys with the Infanta:

“No—sure she is my daughter—or can nature
Thus lie like truth? Yes, that blue eye is mine,
And I am pictured in thy every feature—
Child of my love! for such thou art—I fold thee
Thus to my heart—thou art my own”——

but even so saying, a dismal doubt overshadows the king: he fancies he

One act later, midway in the drama, and we have Leontes moved to the remorseful confession, "I have too much believed my own suspicion"—an avowal that saves him not from Paulina's plenitude of reproach: "Thy tyranny"—she *will* call him tyrant now—"together working with thy jealousies,—fancies too weak for boys, too green and idle for girls of nine!—O, think what they have done!" Emilia can objurgate Othello in a not unlike fashion, for Emilia and Paulina are themselves not unlike in the outspoken "courage of their opinions"—but the wife of Iago can never feel towards the Moor of Venice that loathing of indignant contempt which the wife of Antigonus cannot but feel towards the King of Sicily.

Contrasting Leontes with Othello, we feel with La Bruyère, that "*s'il y a un soupçon injuste, bizarre, et sans fondement, qu'on ait une fois appelé jalousie, cette autre jalousie . . . mériterait un autre nom.*" Hermione had as much right as Desdemona to protest, in regard of her husband's jealousy, "I never gave him cause." Emilia's rejoinder is vastly more applicable to Leontes than to the Moor :

"But jealous souls will not be answer'd so ;
They are not ever jealous for the cause,
But jealous for they are jealous : 'tis a monster
Begot upon itself, born on itself." *

The jealousy of Leontes, says the elder Schlegel, is not, like that of Othello, developed through all its causes, symptoms, and variations ; it is brought forward at once full-grown and mature, and is portrayed as a distempered frenzy. "It is a passion with the effects of which the spectator is more concerned than with its origin, and which does not produce the catastrophe, but merely ties the knot

can detect another likeness in that fair young face, and he pushes the Infanta from him, and madly bids his pet begone.

* We might apply honest Caleb Garth's remark, "Pooh ! where's the use of asking for such fellows' reasons? The soul of man when it gets fairly rotten, will bear you all sorts of poisonous toadstools, and no eye can see whence came the seed thereof."—*Middlemarch*, chap. xl.

of the piece." There is a sort of jealousy which, as George Eliot says, needs very little fire: it is hardly a passion, but a blight bred in the cloudy, damp despondency of uneasy egoism. The argument of Coleridge in his celebrated Lectures was, that Othello is anything but jealous in his nature, and made so only by the machinations of Iago, while Leontes requires no prompter but his own suspicious mind. Leontes might almost stand for Dr. Moore's picture of Zeluco, as the greatest of self-tormentors—his restless mind eternally suggesting fresh causes of disquiet to itself. Two ideas at one time were the very present plague of Zeluco—that his wife disliked him, and that she was fond of another. "There was no cure for the first, but his becoming an honest man, which was not in his nature; and the cure of the other was nearly as difficult; for to remove suspicions from the breast of a man given to jealousy, and prevent their returning, would be changing his nature." This passion has a tendency not only to sour the temper, but to obscure the understanding; else how should "trifles, light as air, be to the jealous confirmation strong as proofs of holy writ"? Philip of Orleans is told by Anne of Austria in a French historical romance, "Your jealousy is not merely a defect, it is a positive disease. And do you imagine that a complaint which exists only in your own imagination can be cured? You wish it to be said you are right in being jealous, when there is no ground whatever for your jealousy."* As Alcippe says in Corneille,

"La jalousie aveugle un cœur atteint,
Et, sans examiner, croit tout ce qu'elle craint."

More applicable still to Leontes is the remonstrance of Philinte addressed to Molière's misanthrope:

"Peut-être est-ce un soupçon conçu légèrement;
Et votre esprit jaloux prend parfois des chimères."

* Dr. Holmes describes, in the case of one of his characters, how, "with that ingenuity which always accompanies jealousy," he tortured every circumstance to make it square with his belief. Monsieur de Villardin in *John Marston Hall* is another of the same type—designed to show that there is never any telling to what acts of weakness, folly, or meanness, a suspicious nature will not reduce a man.

How characteristic of Leontes is the manner in which he suddenly resents his friend's compliance with that urgent invitation to prolong his stay, to which Hermione had been prompted by her husband. "At *my* request he would not!"* And his self-torturing analysis of his sensations gives force to that passage in which—a parallel to one in *Othello*—he descants on the comparative blessedness of unrecognized calamity and wrong. He sighs at knowing too much.

" There may be in the cup
A spider steep'd, and one may drink; depart,
And yet partake no venom; for his knowledge
Is not infected: but if one present
The abhorr'd ingredient to his eye, make known
How he hath drank, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
With violent hefts :—I have drank, and seen the spider."

* In one of Joanna Baillie's Plays on the Passions, the question is put,—

" My lord, what would your gentle countess say,
If she o'erheard her own request neglected,
Until supported by a name more potent ? "

In another, the Duke of Mantua eggs on Victoria to secure Count Basil's consent

" to grace my court another day ;
I shall not be offended when I see
Your power surpasses mine."

Mrs. Bertram's signs of yielding to the written appeal of Lucius Davoren arouse misgivings in her perplexed suitor : "*His* eloquence has more power than mine," said Geoffrey, with kindling jealousy.—It was difficult for good old Lady Margaret of Tillietudlem to forgive Claverhouse his neglect of her intercession for Henry Morton. And Major Bellenden, while upholding the supremacy of martial law, was free to own that Colonel Grahame was deficient in respect to his suppliant hostess ; nor, the rebuffed veteran adds, " am I over and above pre-eminently flattered by his granting to young Evandale (I suppose because he is a lord, and has interest with the privy-council) a request which he refused to so old a servant of the king as I am."—Mr. Trollope's Miss Mackenzie has a conscience in these matters of preferential concession. Pressed to stay by Lady Ball, and declining, she cannot, on that account, yield afterwards, as she inclines to do, when pressed by that " nice-looking, smooth-faced young fellow," Jack. She must not, by invidious compliance with the request of the grandson, give the grandmother the right to exclaim with bitterness,

" At *my* request, she would not."

Hence these violent heavings—as of one that would be rid of the abomination too wittingly gulped down.*

Leontes is hardly a whit better than that fairy-tale emperor in *Valentine and Orson*, whose unworthy treatment

* At the inn at Terracina, Geoffrey Crayon took note at dinner-time of “what appeared to be a dish of stewed eels,” of which an Englishman present ate with great relish, but “had nearly refunded them” when told that they were vipers, caught among the rocks of Terracina, and esteemed a great delicacy.

Pallet, in *Peregrine Pickle*, was almost gluttonous over a so-called “fricassee of rabbit,” and declared it to be one of the best he ever tasted. But a convulsive reaction, described in Smollett’s least refined style, ensued, when Tom Piper reported the connexion of that dish with what he had seen hanging by the pantry-door, in the shape of “the skin and feet of a special ram-cat, new flayed.”

Such tricks are sometimes played in real life; but, as there are strong stomachs as well as queasy ones, not always with success. Sir Eardley Wilmot, in his memoirs of Mr. Assheton Smith, notes how a steak from Baronet, Sir James Musgrave’s horse, was served up at Melton, and how William Cooke, after “partaking of it,” was told what he had been eating,—but, instead of being disgusted, he immediately called out for another cut from the same steak. This was before hippophagy had come to be accepted as one of the triumphs of civilization.

Lord Anson’s crew had a pronounced dislike to seal’s flesh, until they agreed together to call it lamb—and by dint of “pretending very much” that it was lamb, they came to like it well enough. Such is the power of names, or the force of imagination!—Miss Leslie, in her *Recollections of Lisbon*, speaking of kids as much eaten in Portugal, remarks that it is not altogether safe to venture on one, unless you are quite sure that it is not a cat. “I am still uneasy with a misgiving, that at a table not our own, I *did* eat a slice of grimalkin kid; and I can never be quite certain that I *did* not. I must say, however, that whether of the feline species or not, it looked and tasted well.” And what more would the signora have? Could she not let good digestion wait on appetite, without fostering imaginative misgivings to spoil all? If the drink went down well, why should she insist on seeing the spider?

In the *Ixthovophagia* of Erasmus, a story is told of a bachelor of divinity dying of consumption, who, from theological scruples, and though urged by his bishop to comply, resisted all the advice of his physicians to have recourse to a diet of eggs and milk. At last, when it became evident that he would die rather than follow a prescription which would compel him to break the fasts of the church, it was determined to practise a deception upon him, and a drink was accordingly prepared of eggs and goat’s milk,

of his unjustly suspected empress his very courtiers cry shame on: Hermione-like, Bellisant is repudiated, together with her infant child. This is the Kitley type of jealousy that, as a pestilence, affects and infects

“The houses of the brain. First it begins
Solely to work upon the phantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air
As soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence
Sends like contagion to the memory:
Still each to other giving the infection,

which he eagerly swallowed. Within a few days he began to get better, and went on gaining strength until a servant-maid revealed the trick, when he immediately began to vomit up again what he had eaten.

Then again in the *Tischreden* of Luther may be read how a rich Jew, on his death-bed, ordered that his remains should be conveyed to Ratisbon, and how his friends, to save heavy toll, packed the carcase in a barrel of wine, and how the carriers, ignorant of the solid contents, “tapped the barrel, and “swilled away right joyously, till they found out they had been drinking Jew’s pickle. How it fared with them *then*, you may imagine.” Among the early English metrical romances is one concerning convalescent Richard Lion-heart’s violent longing for pork, after his attack of ague in the Holy Land: pork was not easily to be had in so anti-porcine a region. But an old knight was equal to the emergency:

“Take a Saracen, young and fat;
In haste let the thief be slain,
Open’d, and his skin off flayn;
And sodden full hastily
With powder and with spicery,
And with saffron of good colour.

* * * *

The king ate the flesh and gnawed the bones,
And drank well after for the nonce.
And when he had eaten enough,
His folk hem turn’d away, and lough.”

Let them laugh. The king enjoyed his pork, and was himself again. Anon he called for the head of that swine, and fearful was the dismay of the cook. But soon the cook’s terrors were dissipated, for Richard had a strong stomach, and the discovery caused him no disgust after all.

Hagiology makes devout and admiring record of Saint Narbert’s virtue in swallowing, without flinching, the spider he saw floating in the consecrated cup.

It has been said of refinement, that, being clean itself, it supposes that others are clean also, until forcibly undeceived—indeed, resolutely prefers to trust, rather than have the imagination polluted by the repulsive

Which as a subtle vapour spreads itself
 Confusedly through every sensitive part,
 Till not a thought or notion in the mind
 Be free from the black poison of suspect."

A contemporary of Rare Ben's remarked that by suspecting that to be which we see not, we intimate to the world either what our own lives have been, or what our dispositions are. Feltham calls jealousy the worst kind of madness—"a gin which we set to catch serpents, which, as soon as we have caught them, sting us. Are we not mad, who, being at peace, [Leontes-like] must needs go in search of discontentments?" The author of *Sayings and Doings* has among his characters that of a man who, having fondly loved, begins to collate and compare a multitude of inconsiderable trifles (*not* unconsidered ones), all converging to the one point of undeceiving himself, and who does so with a cherished predisposition to doubt and suspect; and no sooner has suspicion been allowed to supplant confidence, than the most innocent actions are coloured up in tints to suit his heated imagination, and glare before his eyes as so many proofs of consummate hypocrisy and duplicity, if not of actual guilt. A more noteworthy portrait, full length, is the Griffith Gaunt of Mr. Charles Reade, who is Leontes-like thus far, that he is not, as Othello, made jealous by some envious conspiring friend, or by mere misinterpreted circumstance: "jealousy in him is an inborn uncontrollable fiend;" it is not, his critics observe, that circumstance slowly develops it; the passion is always there, ready to seize and colour circumstance. Jeffrey objected to Joanna Baillie's *Romero*, as depicted in her play on the passion of jealousy, that in him the passion appears causeless, utterly inconsistent with reason, and therefore degrading to the character: he cannot claim our sympathy, and indeed can excite little

details of over-curious investigators, and would sooner swallow one spider, whether moral or physical, in ignorance, than have the gorge perpetually rising at possible spiders. To apply a couplet of Pope's, transcribed from Chaucer,—

"'Tis better, sure, when blind, deceived to be,
 Than be deluded when a man can see."

or no interest, because we feel that such a being, "following still the changes of the moon with fresh suspicions," must be one of a naturally mean and weak character of mind; nor is it easy to conceive that one who cherishes this vice in the blood—this constitutional tendency towards causeless suspicion, should retain those other nobler and redeeming qualities with which his jealousy is here associated. Mariana, in *The Wife*, is spirited in self-respect when she asserts,

" Could he who proved my love on grounds so broad
As I have given my lord; on grounds so mean
Descend to harbour question of my love—
Though broke my heart in the disseverment,
He were no longer lord or aught of mine ! "

But, as it happens, Mariana's husband is far above such mean suspicions, and his style to her is, "No!—thou didst never swerve: Truth dwells in thee—Thou art all radiant with it!" And when the rascally tempter tells him, Iago-like, "Your highness sees how hinges fact on fact," "No!—I see nothing!" replies Leonardo. So that, in fact, Charles Lamb made Mariana say in the Epilogue, that, as for *her* Othello, "to his vows more zealous, twenty Iagos could not make *him* jealous." So remote was he from the Leontes type, characterized by the Baron in Tobin's play of *The Curfew*, where he assumes that Fitzharding must have observed,

" For you have deeply read the heart of man,
A wayward disposition in some natures,
Out of the very height of their enjoyments
To breed their discontents; and make, like devils,
A hell of paradise."

The sudden jealousy of Leontes is set down as, though not impossible, still unaccountable, by Hartley Coleridge, who traces Shakspeare throughout in a *Winter's Tale*, but not always Shakspeare in a happy vein—the serious portion of the play, the scenes which carry on the plot, appearing to

this fine critic not only harsh in the thought, but infelicitous in diction, whereas he calls the comedy parts excellent, and the pastoral exquisite. He would not deny that the ready soliciting of Hermione and the easy compliance of Polixenes might produce, in a better mind than that of the Sicilian tyrant, a momentary cloud, a wish that the request had not been made, an impatience for Polixenes' departure. "How slight a spark may cause explosion in the foul atmosphere of a despot's heart, it is hard to say. Irresponsible power is tyranny without, and moral anarchy within." It is to an Eastern despot that the lines in Racine refer :

"Amant avec transport, mais jaloux sans retour,
Sa haine va toujours plus loin que son amour.
Ne vous assurez point sur l'amour qu'il vous porte;
Sa jalouse fureur n'en sera que plus forte."

We should, with Hartley Coleridge, little wonder at the conduct of Leontes in an Eastern tale: many of the sultans in the Arabian Nights act as madly and wickedly, whom yet the inventors evidently meant for wise and gracious princes; nay, history records abundant instances of like abjuration of reason in men not incapable of generosity or incidental greatness, to say nothing of taste and sensibility for which some of the worst of kings have been conspicuous. But it is urged that to the sternest tragedy, if fit for drama at all, should be confined the exhibition of such madness of the heart. "The grossness of Leontes' imaginations, his murderous suggestions, and inaccessibility to reason, remorse, or religion, are naturally consequent on the base passion, say rather the unclean dæmon, that possesses him. It is nature such as may still be found in St. Giles's." But the question occurs, is it possible that one who had once fallen thus could ever again be worthy of a restoration to happiness? And the answer is ready—in the constituted order of human progression, surely never. Remorse, it is allowed, the tyrant would feel; but it would urge him to vengeance on the instruments of his crimes—perhaps to some superstitious rite, some self-sought atonement; be

never, the same commentator* contends, to a heart-cleansing repentance.†

Professor Dowden, who speaks of the jealous passion of Leontes as "hideously grotesque," accepts as a fact, nevertheless, that the heart of the king is at length instructed and purified by anguish and remorse. He has "performed a saint-like sorrow," redeemed his faults, paid down more penitence than done trespass; wherefore Leontes is received back without reproach into the arms of his wife, who, the critic significantly remarks, embraces him in silence, allowing the good pain of his repentance to effect its utmost work.

§ II.

HERMIONE LOST AND LAMENTED.

ADDISON observes in the *Spectator*, as one among the torments produced by the passion of jealousy, that none are greater mourners than jealous men, when the person who provoked their jealousy is taken from them: then it is that

* Hermione he characterizes as frank and noble, rising in dignity as she falls in fortune—not unlike Marie Antoinette, whose unsuspecting levity, though it alienated not her husband, exposed her to the slander of foul minds that had not even the excuse of jealousy—in sunshine a butterfly, in misery a martyr.

† Badly as Hartley Coleridge thought of Leontes, not even in him did the critic find the odiousness of jealousy displayed in such glowing colours as in the Leonatus Posthumus of *Cymbeline*, who, in plain terms, acts a villain's part. "Shakspeare wisely conceives jealousy to be a passion pre-existent to the occasions it is sure to find or seek."—*Notes on Shakspeare: Essays*, ii., pp. 148 sq., 190 sq.

Mrs. Jameson observes that the jealousy which in Othello and Posthumus is an error of judgment, in Leontes is a vice of the blood: he suspects without cause, condemns without proof; he is without excuse,—unless the mixture of pride, passion, and imagination, and the predisposition to jealousy with which Shakspeare has portrayed him, be considered as an excuse.

their love breaks out furiously, and throws off all the mixture of suspicion which choked and smothered it before : the beautiful parts of the character rise uppermost in the jealous husband's memory, and upbraid him with the ill-usage of so divine a creature as was once in his possession ; whilst all the little imperfections that were before so uneasy to him, wear off from his remembrance, and show themselves no more. "How will this grieve you," exclaimed the remonstrant Hermione, when striving in vain to dispel the baseless suspicions of Leontes, or to stay his public denunciation of her as disloyal,—

"How will this grieve you,
When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that
You thus have publish'd me ! Gentle my lord,
You scarce can right me thoroughly then, to say
You did mistake."

From the first, Hermione, whose clear-sightedness, says Professor Dowden, is equal to her courage, had perceived that her husband laboured under a delusion which was cruel and calamitous to himself : from the first she transcends all blind resentment, and has true pity for the man who wrongs her. But, as the critic goes on to show, if she has fortitude for her own uses, she also is able to accept for her husband the inevitable pain which is needful to restore him to his better mind. "She will not shorten the term of his suffering, because that suffering is beneficent. And at the last her silent embrace carries with it—and justly—a portion of that truth she had uttered long before," in the lines just quoted. The calm and complete comprehension of the fact is rightly said to be a possession painful yet precious to Hermione, which lifts her above all vulgar confusion of heart or temper, and above all unjust resentment.

By the time the fifth act opens, Leontes is so persistent in remorse that his councillors beseech him to forget his evil, and forgive himself. Has he not paid down more penitence than done trespass ? His answer is :

"Whilst I remember
Her, and her virtues, I cannot forget

My blemishes in them ; and so still think of
 The wrong I did myself ; which was so much,
 That heirless it hath made my kingdom, and
 Destroy'd the sweet'st companion that e'er man
 Bred his hopes out of."

The Friar in *Much Ado about Nothing* expounds and adopts the philosophy of this remorse, in the partly parallel case of Hero, unjustly aspersed and cruelly repudiated by Claudio. He plans a report of her death, as the immediate result of the foul wrong done to her ; and thus, she dying upon the instant that she was accused, shall be lamented, pitied, and excused, of every hearer : "For it so falls out, that what we have we prize not to the worth whiles we enjoy it ; but being lacked and lost, why then we rack the value :

"So will it fare with Claudio :
 When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
 Into his study of imagination ;
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving-delicate, and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she lived indeed :—then shall he mourn
 And wish he had not so accused her."

Hermione's words of tender forecast have their echo in those of Imogen, when from afar she addresses her Leonatus, and for his sake is sorry for her own sufferings :

"I grieve myself
 To think, when thou shalt be disedged by her
 That now thou tir'st on, how thy memory
 Will then be pang'd by me."

Hermione's prevision and prediction are at one with those of Sostrata in Terence: *Meque abs te immerito esse accusatam, postmodo rescisces, scio*. But so too does the style of incredulous Laches tally with that of infatuated Leontes: *Te immerito? an quicquam pro istis factis dignum te dici potest —quæ me et te et familiam dedecoras, filio luctum paras,*

(applying the last clause to Mamilius, who pined to death at Hermione's disgrace). There is a line, however, by another speaker, later in the play (*Hecyra*), which might stand for the after remorse and self-reproach of Leontes: "Sed cum orata ejus reminiscor, nequeo quin lacrymem miser." In a fit of jealous rage, Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, killed his wife Melissa, whom he is said to have ardently loved; discovering her innocence, he caused her accusers to be burnt alive, while he cherished the keenest remorse for his own credulity and fatal haste.* The metrical

* Instances of royal remorse, more or less analogous, might be offered in the case of Philip V. of Macedon, putting his younger son, Demetrius, to death, at the instigation of the elder, Perseus; and himself having his days shortened by remorse and indignation consequent on the discovery of innocence;—of Constantine's alleged anguish after putting Crispus to death, as soon as he discovered the falsehood of the accusation by which his credulity had been so fatally misled; but Gibbon is entirely sceptical as to the emperor's repentance and remorse, whatever the stories told of his publishing it to the world, of his mourning forty days, during which he abstained from the use of the bath, and all the ordinary comforts of life; and of his erecting, for the lasting instruction of posterity, a golden statue of Crispus, with the memorable inscription, "To my son, whom I unjustly condemned." From a later chapter of Gibbon may be cited the instance of that Sigismond who has acquired the honours of a saint and martyr, but whose hands were stained with the blood of his innocent son. "He soon discovered his error, and bewailed the irreparable loss." While Sigismond embraced the corpse, one of his attendants broke out upon him quite in the style of Paulina rating Leontes: "It is not his situation, O king! it is thine which deserves pity and lamentation." The melancholy fate of Peter de Vineâ, according to Dante the victim (as Sigismond's son had been, by stepmotherly arts) of wicked and calumnious jealousy, may well have revenged itself, as Milman says, on the stricken and desolate heart of Frederick II., if indeed the Kaiser ever really discovered its injustice.

Justly admired is the account of Theodoric by Procopius as a beautiful picture of what a king and a conqueror should be: when he had been betrayed, by false information, into one act of injustice, "the first, the last," he died of grief.

The pathos of Beth Gélert dates from the same source:

"Vain, vain, 'was all Llewelyn's woe;
' Best of thy kind, adieu!

romance of *Lucile* offers us this strain of self-reproach on the hero's past :

“ ‘And so,’ to himself did he mutter, ‘and so
 ’Twas to rescue my life, gentle spirit ! and, oh,
 For this did I doubt her ? a light word—a look—
 The mistake of a moment ! for this I forsook—
 For this ? Pardon, pardon, *Lucile* ! O *Lucile* !’
 Thought and memory rang, like a funeral peal,
 Weary changes on one dirge-like note thro’ his brain,
 As he stray’d down the darkness.”

A close resemblance of *Hermione* to *Imogen* and to *Desdemona* has been found in this, that all three are placed

The frantic blow which laid thee low
 This heart shall ever rue.”

In prose fiction we are often lighting on such words as the upbraiding, “How will you ever bear it when you come to your senses, and know what it is you have been doing !” piteously addressed to her son *Wilfrid* by *Madonna Mary*.

Not to fiction by any means is confined another class of these remonstrant and reproachful predictions—the utterance, namely, of fussy self-absorption and self-conceit, or of artful dissimulation and pretentious fine-ladyism. *Cleopatra* despatches *Mardian* to tell *Antony* that she has slain herself, speaking of him to the last ; and to bring her word how *Antony* takes her death. Womanish arts and affectations of this sort are satirized by *Burns* in a song that puts this piteous question and supplies this pitiless answer ; plaintive wife begins, and imperturbable husband has the last word :

“ ‘My poor heart then break it must, my last hour I’m near it :
 When you lay me in the dust, think, think how you will bear it.’
 ‘I will hope and trust in heaven, *Nancy*, *Nancy* ;
 Strength to bear it will be given, my spouse, *Nancy*.’ ”

Mrs. Joe Gargery seizes on the incidental mention of the churchyard by her husband or brother, to exclaim—though only one of the two had mentioned it,—“Churchyard, indeed ! you may well say churchyard, you two ! You’ll drive *me* to the churchyard betwixt you, one of these days, and oh, a pr-r-recious pair you’d be without me !” *Miggs* is but *Mrs. Varden*’s spokeswoman when she upbraids that lady’s husband indirectly as one of those who “never know the full value of *some* wines and fig-trees till they lose ’em. So much the worse, sir, for them as has the slighting of ’em on their consciences, when they’re gone to be in full blow

in situations nearly similar, and equally endowed with engaging qualities: they are all three gentle, beautiful, and innocent; all three are models of conjugal submission, truth, and tenderness; and all three are victims of the unfounded jealousy of their husbands. Critically speaking, however, the character of Hermione is held to be the most simple of the three in point of dramatic effect—that of Imogen the most varied and complex. Imogen indeed combines the best qualities of both, with others which they do not possess. What they do possess distinctively is, in Desdemona, gentleness and refined grace; in Hermione, magnanimity and fortitude. Mrs. Jameson describes in the character of Hermione dignity without pride, love without passion, and tenderness without weakness. And on her showing, it required a Shakspeare to delineate such a character (in

elsewhere.” “St. Clare always laughs when I make the least allusion to my ill-health,” murmurs that vapourish, languid, languishing wife of his: “I only hope the day won’t come when he’ll remember it!” and she puts her handkerchief to her eyes, and of course there is a rather foolish silence in the room. Chapters later she will not see that her child Eva is ailing and indeed fading away, but insists on fanciful symptoms of heart-disease of her own, and when mildly bantered on that fancy of hers, falls back on her stock rejoinder, “Well, I only hope you won’t be sorry for this when it’s too late!” Mrs. Gradgrind gives Hibernian expression to a similar frame of mind when she whimpers, “I wish, yes, I really *do* wish that I had never had a family, and then you [the family] would have known what it was to do without me!” Lady Kew, in *The Newcomes*, moots the idea of her “poor Pincushion,” the patient Julia, wanting to get rid of her, “which I dare say you do, for I am a dreadful plague to you, I know, and my death would be a relief to you.” Then again there is the same author’s Lady Baker, who was always giving warning—always fitting the halter and traversing the cart, but for ever declining to drop the handkerchief and have the business over. “I’m sure I am no to haud out for ever against this sort of going on,” whimpers poor Mrs. Bertram in *Guy Mannering*; “but when folk’s missed, then they are moaned.” A vigorous rosy-cheeked young matron, it has been said, may give trouble or comfort to her husband, according to her disposition, but she can never command and control him with that perfect authority which is wielded by the sweet pale creature who is always going to faint, and whose upbraidings are emphasized by the remark, “but it will soon be over,” and that he will be sorry for it all when she is away. Not but

which there enters so much of the negative) in a poetical form; to develope it through the medium of action and dialogue, without the aid of description; to preserve its tranquil, mild, and serious beauty, its unimpassioned dignity, and at the same time keep the strongest hold upon our sympathy and our imagination; and out of this exterior calm, produce the most profound pathos, the most vivid impression of life and internal power. "Hermione is a queen, a matron, and a mother: she is good and beautiful, and royally descended. A majestic sweetness, a grand and gracious simplicity, an easy, unforced, yet dignified self-possession, are in all her deportment, and in every word she utters." She is characterized by the adage, "Still waters run deep:" her passions are not vehement, but in her settled mind the sources of pain or pleasure, love or resent-

that men too can adopt a similar course. Mr. Disraeli describes one who, when he died, found consolation for his death-bed in the reflection that his (imaginary) persecutors might at last feel some compunction; and who quitted the world without a pang, because he flattered himself that his departure would cost them one. Dr. Wilmot, in the *Forlorn Hope*, when assured that his neglected and misunderstood Mabel would have died rather than complain, and that in fact she *had* died, and made no sign,—answers suddenly and bitterly, "Yes, but she has left me this legacy, brought me by your hands, of miserable regret and vain repentance. She has ensured the destruction of my peace of mind; she has taken care that mine shall be no ordinary grief, to be dispelled by time," etc. As the acute Essayist on Social Subjects remarks, when we think that others ill-use us, or are unjust towards us, or neglect us, it is a pretty universal instinct to anticipate the time when they will be sorry for it; and it is wonderful what a weight, what a concentration of bitterness, what a heart-wringing is ascribed to this contemplated regret: so that, if we can but assure ourselves that remorse will inflict its sting some day, this conviction soothes away the ache of present resentment, and even puts us in a sort of charity with our enemy.

Poor Peggotty, in *David Copperfield*, when unjustly accused by her misled mistress, lifted up her hands and eyes, and only answered, in a sort of paraphrase of the grace that little Mas'r Davy usually repeated after dinner, "Lord forgive you, Mrs. Copperfield, and for what you have said this minute, may you never be truly sorry!" That was Peggotty's sort of grace after meat, hard meat, in the shape of hard words she could ill digest.

ment, are like the "springs that feed the mountain lakes, impenetrable, unfathomable, and inexhaustible." All about her have perfect confidence in her goodness and innocence. Her distinctive composure of temper never forsakes her, yet never borders on pride or coldness: it is the fortitude of a gentle but a strong mind, conscious of its freedom from cause for blame. Mr. Grant White says of her, that the sweet and shrinking Perdita is not more purely feminine than the heroic mother Hermione, who, in her noble traits and large outlines, leaves in our memories a figure sad but grand, and like the statue that she feigned to be. The author of *Characteristics of Women* cannot but see that for Hermione to give way to tears and feminine complaints under such a blow as her dear lord dealt her, would be quite incompatible with such a character. She is not prone to weeping, like her sex in general; but in her heart is lodged that honourable grief which "burns worse than tears drown." Her earnest, eloquent justification of herself, and her lofty sense of female honour, are, to the finest of her critics, rendered more affecting and impressive by that chilling despair, that contempt for a life made bitter to her through unkindness, which is betrayed in every word of her speech, though so calm in the main; and when she enumerates the unmerited insults which have been heaped upon her, it is without asperity or reproach, yet in a tone that shows how completely the iron has entered her soul. The objection started by some critics, How could Hermione have obstinately acted the recluse for sixteen years, nor been melted by her husband's repentance? is answered by Professor Wilson with another query: How long would such critics have had her stand out? Four years? six? eight? Shakspeare chose sixteen; and Wilson deems him right in so choosing, if for no other reason than to bring to her mother's arms that prettiest of pastorals, Perdita. But Shakspeare had other reasons for showing how "Religion hallow'd that severe sojourn;" for, as Mrs. Jameson argues, besides all the probability necessary for the purposes of poetry, it has all the likelihood

it can derive from the peculiar character of Hermione, who (unlike Imogen or Desdemona) is precisely the woman who could and would have acted in such a manner: in a mind like hers, the sense of a cruel injury, inflicted by one she had loved and trusted, without awaking any violent anger, or any desire of vengeance, would sink deep—almost incurably and lastingly deep. So far she is distinguished with a difference from Desdemona and Imogen, who are more flexible in temper, while the circumstances under which she is wronged differ materially, and are far more unpardonable.* Hermione is portrayed as one not over likely either to forgive hastily or forget quickly: her strength of feeling is founded on strength of thought; and where there is little of impulse or imagination—"the depth, but not the tumult of the soul"—there are but two influences which predominate over the will—time and religion. What then remained, but that, "wounded in heart and spirit, she should retire from the world?—not to brood over her wrongs, but to study forgiveness, and wait the fulfilment of the oracle which had promised the termination of her sorrows?" Accepting this view of her character and position, a premature reconciliation would not only have been painfully inconsistent with them, but would have deprived us of that beautiful scene in which Hermione is discovered by her husband as the statue or image of herself. And here the refined author of the *Characteristics* perceives another instance of that admirable art with which the dramatic character is fitted to the circumstances in which it is placed: that perfect command over her own feelings, that complete self-possession necessary to so extraordinary a situation, is consistent with all that we imagine of Hermione; whereas in any other woman it might shock our every idea of probability.

* But upon this last point, *quâ* Imogen, compare the opinion of Hartley Coleridge, cited in footnote at p. 53 *suprà*.

§ III.

HERMIONE REVIVED AND REGAINED.

THE same critics whom Christopher North rated for finding fault with Hermione for her obstinate and sullen seclusion of sixteen years, found a stumblingblock too in the Living Statue. Is the scene extravagant, absurd, unnatural, incredible? Only so, he of the crutch contends, to critics without feeling, passion, fancy, imagination, to all of which that wondrous scene appeals, and over all of which it triumphs. "The delusion is like reality, and the reality like delusion, and in delight they both are dreadful. The sixteen years are swallowed up in that one moment. Never was the passion of joy so tragic. Had Leontes been a nobler being, it had proved mortal." The effect produced on the different persons of the drama by this living statue—an effect which at the same moment is, and is *not*, illusion—the manner in which the feelings of the spectators become entangled between the conviction of death and the impression of life, the idea of a deception and the feeling of a reality, and the exquisite colouring of poetry and touches of natural emotion with which the whole is wrought up,—till wonder, expectation, and intense pleasure hold our pulse and breath suspended on the event,—all this may well be pronounced inimitable. The moment when Hermione descends from her pedestal to the sound of soft music, and throws herself without speaking into her husband's arms, may well be deemed one of inexpressible interest. To Mrs. Jameson it appears that Hermione's silence during the whole of this scene (except where she invokes a blessing on her daughter's head) is in the finest taste as a poetical beauty, besides being an admirable trait of character. "The misfortunes of Hermione, her long religious seclusion, the wonderful and almost supernatural part she had just enacted, have invested her with such a sacred and awful charm, that any words put into her mouth, must, I think, have injured the solemn and profound pathos of the situation."

While several of Shakspeare's female characters are owned to surpass Hermione in the power they exercise over our feelings, our fancy, our understanding, perhaps not one of them, with the possible exception of Cordelia, is constructed upon so high and pure a principle; and it is the union of gentleness and power which constitutes the perfection of mental grace; (as, among the ancients, the graces were also the charities, and one word signified equally strength and virtue.) This feeling, carried into the fine arts, one of the finest of art critics recognizes as the secret of the antique grace—the grace of repose; and Shakspeare's delineation of Hermione, in which we have the old Greek largeness of conception and delicacy of execution—the same effect of suffering without passion, and grandeur without effort, is claimed to show that he felt within himself, and by intuition, what we study all our lives in the remains of ancient art. The calm, regular, classical beauty of Hermione's character is to such loving students all the more impressive from the wild and gothic accompaniments of her story, and the beautiful relief afforded by the pastoral and romantic grace which is thrown around her daughter Perdita. The classical and the romantic meet together; the statue and the shepherdess embrace each other.

When Mr. Durham, the sculptor, some years ago, produced his statue of Hermione, to be placed in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, critics who were fain to recognize a certain air of life piercing through the figure's monumental pose,—the bosom throbbing under the right hand, and the left thrilling to its finger-tips,—yet objected to the design itself as radically a mistake, the office of sculpture being to represent in stone a living human being, whereas it cannot, with any approach to adequacy, represent a human being who affects to be a statue; because the simulated stoniness in the human being must merge into the mere inevitable stoniness of the sculpture, and the story remains wholly untold. "The statue *is* what the human being affects to be—it cannot both be itself and represent the affectation of being itself." But one can readily imagine

how natural to minds given to "half-thinking"—perhaps those who give the commission, rather than the artist himself in any such case—may have been the notion, that a woman pretending to be a statue was the subject of subjects for sculpture—the very thing. Unfortunately for them, the very thing which it is quite impossible to manage. The statue in real stone of a simulated statue in flesh and blood, is something too complicated for material manipulation. It would overtask the skill even of "that rare Italian master, Julio Romano," to whom Shakspeare audaciously ascribed the credit of Paulina's treasured possession—that masterpiece many years in doing, by a master who, "had he himself eternity, and could put breath into his work, would beguile nature of her custom, so perfectly is he her ape: he so near to Hermione hath done Hermione, that, they say, one would speak to her, and stand in hope of answer." As indeed Leontes does. Paulina contrives the exhibition with consummate art and patient circumspection, and the result is a signal and unqualified success.

"Paulina.

As she lived peerless,
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,
Excels whatever yet you look'd upon,
Or hand of man hath done ; therefore I keep it
Lonely, apart. But here it is : prepare
To see the life as lively mock'd, as ever
Still sleep mock'd death : behold, and say 'tis well.

[PAULINA draws a curtain, and discovers a statue.

I like your silence, it the more shows off
Your wonder : but yet speak ;—first you, my liege ;
Comes it not something near ?

Leontes.

Her natural posture !—
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say, indeed,
Thou art Hermione : or rather, thou art she,
In thy not chiding ; for she was as tender
As infancy and grace.—But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled ; nothing
So aged as this seems

Paul.

So much the more our carver's excellence,
Which lets go by some sixteen years, and makes her
As she lived now.

Leon.

As now she might have done,

So much to my good comfort, as it is
 Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood
 Even with such life of majesty (warm life,
 As now it coldly stands), when first I woo'd her !
 I am ashamed: Does not the stone rebuke me
 For being more stone than it?"

Perdita would kiss the hand of her sculptured mother—and that makes Paulina interpose: "O, patience, the statue is but newly fix'd, the colour's* not dry." She is for

* Of course it is of material import to the *vraisemblance* of the entire scene, that the statue is throughout, and that repeatedly, declared to be a coloured one. Modern taste has been offended by the "crude and ignorant attempts to reproduce the polychrome of the ancients in those scandalous caricatures of colour which are to be seen at Sydenham." But even severe and exacting critics are free to hold the precedents and authorities to be so much in favour of polychromy, that it is no longer permissible to question the expediency of reviving the art. The question rather is, how to do it—or perhaps, practically, how not to do it. John Gibson defended his practice by appealing confidently to Grecian precedents; but whoever may have originated the practice, it is evident, said objectors, that it makes a decided approach to the sensuous; and that, except in the hand of an artist who knows exactly how far to go, and has sufficient judgment to stop there, it may easily pass into the voluptuous and meretricious. That statues were sometimes entirely painted by the Greeks, is apparent from what Plato says in the *Republic*, of statue-painters, that not by applying a rich or beautiful colour to any particular part, but by giving every part its local colour, is the whole made a thing of beauty. A dialogue of Lucian, on the other hand, is quoted to show that it was not the common practice to paint the marble entirely; and the inference is that the Venus of Cnidus, by Praxiteles, and other celebrated statues, were not painted, though parts may have been coloured, and the whole body covered with an encaustic varnish. But Praxiteles is believed to have employed Nicias of Athens to colour his statues for him. Modern ingenuity is at fault, however, in discovering what the process of colouring really was.

Herr Adolf Michaelis, in his treatise on *Der Parthenon* and its "polychromy," shows the temple of Athene to have been no exception to the general practice of the Greeks; and his reviewers all but universally admit that the Pentelic marble, however lovely when fresh from the chisel, was coloured by the brush. Nor is it allowed to be surprising that no colour now remains on either architecture or sculpture: the Elgin marbles are known to have been twice "washed over with soap leys" when plaster casts were taken. The colouring of statues would

Could ever yet cut breath? Let no man mock me,
For I will kiss her.

Paul. Good my lord, forbear :
The ruddiness upon her lip is wet ;
You'll mar it, if you kiss it ; stain your own
With oily painting. Shall I draw the curtain ?”

No, not these twenty years,—for him. But it is time for the statue to come down from the pedestal ; and soon by touch, by sound of voice, by loving return of gaze for gaze, and greeting for greeting, Leontes knows her for his own again, and Hermione is revived and regained.

Mrs. Siddons as the statuesque queen is described by the biographer of the Kembles as making, as she stood in

cation of objections to coloured statuary. And what is it that explains and justifies the instinctive objection, æsthetically felt, to wax-work itself? Coleridge moots the question why such simulations of nature as wax-work figures of men and women are “so disagreeable ;”—and his answer is, because, not finding the motion and the life which we expected, we are shocked as by a falsehood,—every circumstance of detail, which before induced us to be interested, making the distance from truth more palpable. You set out, he says, with a supposed reality, and are disappointed and disgusted with the deception ; whereas in a work of genuine imitation, you begin with an acknowledged total difference, and then every touch of nature gives you the pleasure of an approximation to truth. The fundamental principle of all this he takes to be undoubtedly the horror of falsehood and the love of truth inherent in the human breast. We distinguish, as F. W. Robertson somewhere says, between illusion and delusion : we may paint wood so as to be taken for stone, iron, or marble ; this is delusion : but you may paint a picture, in which rocks, trees, and sky are never mistaken for what they seem, yet produce all the emotion which real rocks, trees, and sky would produce :—this is illusion, and this is the painter's art ; never for one moment to deceive by attempted imitation, but to produce a mental state in which the feelings are suggested which the natural objects themselves would create—*plus*, however, a gratified interest in the recognized achievements of art, as such. In the tale he called *Lady Barbara*, Crabbe has a passage conveniently though collaterally pertinent to our theme :

“ Dreams are like portraits, and we find they please
Because they are confess'd resemblances ;
But those strange nightmare visions we compare
To waxen figures—they too real are,
Too much a very truth, and are so just
To life or death, they pain us or disgust.”

Paulina's chapel, "one of the noblest statues that even Grecian taste ever invented." The figure resembled one of the muses in profile. The drapery was ample in its folds, and seemingly stony in its texture. Upon the magical words, pronounced by Paulina, "Music; awake her; strike;" the sudden action of the head is said to have absolutely "startled" every spectator, as though such a miracle had really vivified the marble; and the descent from the pedestal was equally graceful and affecting. To apply Thomson's lines,

"The statue seem'd to breathe,
And soften into flesh, beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flush'd."

Or those again in another of his poems :

"The gazer grows enamour'd, and the stone,
As if exulting in its conquest, smiles.
So turn'd each limb, so swell'd with softening art,
That the deluded eye the marble doubts."

Etty was never better pleased than with the compliment paid him by the Italian Professor of Painting, Martini,—“If I were to prick your painting of the figure, it would bleed;” so like flesh he thought it. Vasari said of one of Raffaele's Madonnas that it seemed in the head, the hands, and the feet, to be of living flesh rather than a thing of colour; and indeed of Raffaele's pictures generally, that they are scarcely to be called pictures, but rather the reality, for the flesh trembles, the breathing is visible, the pulses beat, and life is in its utmost force.* “Ma foi,” as Molière's Sganarelle exclaims of another (quite another) sort of revived statue, “voilà qui est bien fait. Il semble qu'il est en vie, et qu'il s'en va parler.” Dante says of the sculpture described in the tenth canto of the Purgatory, “that not there alone had Polycletus, but e'en nature's self, been shamed:” one angel form before him seemed,

“In a sweet act, so sculptured to the life,

* In all young art, observes Mr. Dallas, there is the tendency to realism; as in nearly all young criticism there is a difficulty of deciding between the truth of imitation and the truth of reality.

He look'd no silent image. One had sworn
He had said 'Hail!'

Only to be appreciated by artists is the enthusiasm of Jules, in Mr. Browning's *Pippa Passes*, when exulting in his "crisp imperious steel, so sure to cut its one confided thought clean out of all the world :

"But marble!—'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly—as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the Earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be work'd."

In Hermione's case, the expression used by Polixenes, "The very life seems warm upon the lip," and that again by Leontes, "warm life—the fixture of her eye has motion in't," etc., appear strangely applied to a statue, such as we usually imagine it, of the cold colourless marble; but it is evident, by the consent of the best critics, that Hermione here personates one of those images or effigies still to be seen in the old Gothic cathedrals, in which the stone, or marble, was coloured after nature. Mrs. Jameson recalls the start she gave when she came suddenly upon one of these effigies, either at Basle or at Fribourg: the figure was large as life; the drapery, of crimson, powdered with stars of gold; the face, and eyes, and hair tinted after the life, though faded by time; it stood in a Gothic niche, over a tomb, and in a kind of dim uncertain light. It would have been very easy, she adds, for a living person to represent such an effigy, particularly if it had been painted by that "rare Italian master, Julio Romano," the reputed artist of Paulina's curtained treasure.

In the fairy tale of the Invisible Prince we have the princess telling Abricotina all the wonders of the "animated statue," that leaped from the pedestal to support her when she swooned, as much for pleasure and surprise as fear. Scott describes his Zilia, in the *Surgeon's Daughter*, when arrested by her husband's warning glance, in the offer to embrace her recovered son, as fixed in that attitude, as if by magic, with her beautiful head and neck somewhat advanced,

her hands clasped together, and extended forward in the semblance of motion, but motionless, nevertheless, as a marble statue, to which the sculptor has given all the appearance of life, yet cannot impart its powers. In *Kenilworth*, again, Amy Robsart, beside an alabaster column in the twilight grotto, is taken by Queen Elizabeth for a statue, rather than a form of flesh and blood: "She stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned." Like Lamartine's

"Femme changée en marbre, en ayant la paleur:
Tout à coup je ne sais quel éclair de pensée
Lui remonta du cœur sur sa joue effacée;
Son front reprit la vie et se teignit un peu."

That last line recalls a passage in the *Pygmalion* of Lovell Beddoes, when to the artist's gaze his statue was one day perceptibly "more near to woman:

"There was a fleshy pink, a dimple wrought
That trembled, and the cheek was growing human
With the flush'd distance of a rising thought
That still crept nearer."

The lovely legend of Pygmalion is justly said to scarcely exaggerate the creative force, the immanence of divinity, which are required by the man whose work is to impress itself on our eyes as "breathing marble." The Sleeping Figure of Modena moved Barry Cornwall to the note of admiration,

"Look! Did old Pygmalion
Sculpture thus, or more prevail,
When he drew the living tone
From the marble pale?"

Admetus in Euripides addresses the Veiled Lady much as Leontes the statuesque Hermione:

"Lady! whoe'er thou art, thou dost in truth
In height and shape resemble my Alcestis,"

and so to see her stirs his troubled heart, and makes the fountains of his tears gush out. Hercules bids him boldly

advance his hand and touch the stranger, and anon the cry is heard,

“Ye gods! what shall I say? a miracle!
Is it my wife I see, my very wife?
Or do the gods but in derision mock me
With a false joy?”

Matilda asks De Tracy, in *The Curfew*, would he see his dead wife, revived?

" Bid the warm blood rush thro' her kindling veins,
And her heart beat with new-created life ;
A breathing woman shall she stand before thee.
. . . . Survey me.

I am the very substance of that form
Whose apparition I do only feign. . . .

Baron. Remembrance steals upon me :
The look, the voice—Yes, yes ; thou art my wife !

Matilda. . . . Speak for me
The silent rapture of these starting tears,
These arms that eager open to enfold thee,"

and so on, with a copious elocution in significant contrast with the almost severe silence of Hermione revived and regained.

Middleton's old play of *No Wit like a Woman's* contains a noteworthy passage descriptive of a meeting with a wife supposed to have been long since dead :

“O my reviving joy! thy quickening presence
Makes the sad night of threescore and ten years
Sit like a youthful spring upon my blood.
I cannot make thy welcome rich enough
With all the wealth of words.”

In the *Golden Supper* versified (and diversified) by Mr. Tennyson from Boccaccio, Julian may be said to play the part of Paulina, in so far as he contrives and arranges the reunion of a sundered pair—assembling an expectant company, and bringing Camilla down before them all, and restoring her in all her grace and beauty to the amazed and ecstatic Lionel :

“ And there the widower husband and dead wife
Rush’d each at each with a cry that rather seem’d
For some new death than for a life renew’d.”

There is something to remind us of the Hermione statue scene, and the passionate expectancy of Leontes, in the closing scene of Massinger's *Duke of Milan*, where Sforza laments his wrongdoing, and "a seeming breath" is evoked from the corpse of her he laments, and art makes "her veins run high too, as if they had true motion,"—and the Duke cries, "Sure, 'tis my good angel!" "I live again in my full confidence that Marcelia may pronounce my pardon. . . .

"This hand seems as it was when first I kiss'd it.
These lips invite too. I could ever feed
Upon these roses; they still keep their colour
And native sweetness."

So again is there in the vision of Astarte to Byron's *Manfred*:
"Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek. . . . It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread to look upon the same. . . . Astarte, my beloved! speak to me." And so again is there, in an utterly different way, in Bertram's "Vision of a lady! stand there silent, stand there steady!" as pictured in one of the best known of Mrs. Browning's poems:

"Ever, evermore the while in a slow silence she kept smiling,
And approach'd him slowly, slowly, in a gliding measured pace;
With her two white hands extended, as if praying one offended,
And a look of supplication, gazing earnest in his face.

Said he—'Wake me not by gesture,—sound of breath, or stir of
vesture;

Let the blessed apparition melt not yet to its divine!

No approaching—hush! no breathing! or my heart must swoon to
death in

The too utter life thou bringest—O thou dream of Geraldine!"

CHAPTER III.

Othello and Desdemona.

§ I.

OTHELLO.

JOHN KEMBLE took one exception and made one objection—but then he deemed it a fatal one—to Edmund Kean's Othello : If the justness of the conception, he said, had been but equal to the brilliancy of the execution, it would have been perfect ; but the whole thing was a mistake ; the fact being that " Othello was a slow man." Kemble's own biographer, Mr. Boaden, describes *him* as " grand, and awful, and pathetic " in the part ; adding, " But he was a European : there seemed to be philosophy in his bearing ; there was reason in his rage "—as though he took his cue from the hint, " as one not easily jealous." Now the best critics are generally agreed that the barbarian element in Othello is radically strong, and that he is *not* a European, in John Kemble's and James Boaden's sense. Schlegel even contends that the Moor's jealousy is not the jealousy of the heart, which is compatible with the tenderest feeling and adoration of the beloved object ; but of that sensual kind which, in burning climes, has led to the " disgraceful confinement of women and many other unnatural usages." The Moor, as thus interpreted, seems noble, frank, confiding, grateful for the love shown him ; and he is all this, and, moreover, a hero who spurns at danger, a worthy leader of an army, a faithful servant of the state ; but the mere physical force of passion puts to flight in one moment all his acquired and mere habitual virtues,

and gives the upper hand to the savage over the moral man. This tyranny of the blood over the will in Kemble's "slow man," betrays itself even in the expression of his desire of revenge upon Cassio; while in his own repentance, in a "genuine tenderness for his murdered wife, and in the presence of the damning evidence of his deed, the painful feeling of annihilated honour at last bursts forth; and in the midst of these torturing emotions he assails himself with the rage wherewith a despot punishes a runaway slave." He is thus said to suffer as a double man; at once in the higher and the lower sphere into which his being was divided. An Edinburgh Reviewer selects him as the perfection of the inconsistent character; a union not merely of dissimilar qualities, but of dissimilar natures: he is a civilized barbarian—all that we know of his birth being, that it is "fetched from men of royal siege." How or when he became a Christian we are not told; but it is certain that he must have passed his childhood in a harem, acquiring with his earliest impressions the jealousy and suspicion respecting women, and the domestic despotism of a Mahometan court. His youth and manhood are military; and we find him, at the opening of the play, "somewhat declined into the vale of years," a grave and dignified soldier. He is

"the noble Moor whom the full senate
Call all-in-all sufficient—the noble nature
Whom passion cannot shake; whose solid virtue
The shot of accident or dart of chance
Can neither graze nor pierce."

All the barbarian is obliterated. His behaviour during the first two acts justifies Ludovico's praise: nothing can be more calm or more polished. But Iago's intimations "act on Othello like a specific poison." The suspicion thus engendered sets on fire, as Mr. Senior words it, "all the old Mahometan tendency to jealousy which a European life seemed to have eradicated," and the barbarian nature reappears, though at first the Moor's habits of civilization combat it, and he proposes rational inquiry before rash-

resolve. But the barbarian gets the upper hand, and Othello swallows with eager credulity Iago's demonstrative fictions. He no longer thinks of inquiry, or of separation. "He is again the Arab or Bedouin of his youth; and no conduct, except such as might fit a Bedouin or an Arab, occurs to him." His cry is for "blood, Iago, blood!" and from thence to the close the savage in him reigns triumphant: he does not preserve even the outward proprieties of his station, but insults and strikes his wife in the presence of the envoy from the Senate. But no sooner has he satiated his revenge than "the spirit from the desert seems to be appeased by the sacrifice, and quits him." He listens to the proofs of Desdemona's innocence, apologizes frankly to Cassio, and sits in judgment on his own folly and crime,—resuming the calm dignity of a great Venetian leader.* He recovers the quiet dignity of his earlier attitude; respecting which, an American critic, arguing against the vulgar notion of jealousy as Othello's distinctive fault, observes, that as if to show how imperturbable he is by the impulse of insufficient excitement and irritation, nothing can be more admirable than the unbroken calm he seems to dwell in during the first part of the play—the heroic repose of his spirit—his majestic self-possession under the reproaches heaped on him by one who is secure from his resentment. Othello a type of jealousy? Jealousy is a mean passion, for narrow minds; whereas "all the passions of Othello are heroic and magnanimous." Give him credit for his self-assertion at the last, as one "not easily jealous." Jealousy is defined by Coleridge a vice of the mind, a culpable tendency of the temper, having certain well-known and well-defined effects and concomitants, all of which are visible in Leontes, but not one of which, he is bold to affirm, marks its presence in

* Coleridge observed, in his lectures, that the difficulty was great in imagining an expression adequate to the feelings of Othello when he first sees Iago after having discovered his villany, and he thought it a master-stroke of Shakspeare to surmount it as he has done :

"I look down towards his feet ;—but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee."

Othello. It is for a Rymer to call this play "the tragedy of the pocket-handkerchief."* Othello does not kill Desdemona in jealousy, Coleridge insists, but in a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago—such a conviction as any man would and must have entertained who had believed Iago's honesty as Othello did:—we, the audience, know that Iago is a villain from the beginning; but, in considering the essence of the Shakspearian Othello, we must perseveringly place ourselves in his situation, and surrounded by his circumstances. As the French duke is soothingly reminded in a widely read historical novel, a man can scarcely be considered guilty for having done what he was impelled to by the basest conspiracy to deceive him and to mislead his better judgment, and when such evidence was adduced to make him think the innocent guilty, as might well create suspicion against an angel of heaven. But the unhappy dupe in this case accounts it sorry con-

* The fall of a handkerchief is, indeed, all the machinery by means of which the plot is entangled so intricately; but "there's magic in the web of it;" a sibyl in her prophetic fury sewed the work, and sad work she made of it. Shakspeare was careful to guard against homely associations of a ludicrous sort in respect of this magic-woven kerchief, as though he had foreseen the fun the French would make of a dropped *mouchoir*, by them regarded as no better than what English slang denominates a "wipe." The Ingoldsby Legends take the comic side of such a critical loss, on the part of Catherine of Cleves, when

" In her hurry she, somehow or other, let fall
A new silk Bandana she'd worn as a shawl;
She had used it for drying
Her bright eyes while crying,
And blowing her nose, as her beau talk'd of dying."

Ducis had been shy of the handkerchief affair in his traduction, or translated version, of *Othello*; but Alfred de Vigny had more respect for his original, and more faith in him, and when that more conscientious translator's version was played at Paris in 1829, all went well with the performance until the *mouchoir* scene—"la terrible scène où se décide la destinée de Desdémone," when her husband demands "le mouchoir qu'a su dérober la ruse infernale d'Iago." But at the very sound of the word *mouchoir*, peals of laughter were heard—peals succeeding peals—then hisses, then uproar and riotous disorder: the habitués of la rue Richelieu, says M. Demogeot, could not endure this ill-bred Moor, who, in the

solation to know that he has been a fool, a gross and egregious fool.

“O purblind race of miserable men,
How many among us at this very hour
Do forge a lifelong trouble for ourselves,
By taking true for false, or false for true !”

Charles Lamb describes a mere popular audience shedding tears at the play, “because a blackamoor in a fit of jealousy kills his innocent white wife;” but, of the texture of Othello’s mind, he goes on to say, the inward construction marvelously laid open with all its strengths and weaknesses, its heroic confidences and its human misgivings, its agonies of hate springing from the depths of love, they see no more than “the spectators at a cheaper rate, who pay their pennies apiece to look through the man’s telescope in Leicester Fields, see into the inward plot and topography of the moon.” It is in working the Moor’s noble nature

height of his fury, forgot or was unable to invent an elegant periphrasis after the manner of Delille, a pretty charade “dont le mot fut *un mouchoir*.”—As to Ducis, that indefatigable tamperer with the text and the meaning of Shakspeare was avowedly ignorant of the English language. After he had done *Hamlet* into French, we find him writing to Garrick, regretfully, or at least with a polite affectation of regret, “Mais pourquoi, Monsieur, ne sais-je pas votre langue !” Sainte-Beuve styles him accordingly a priest who knew no Latin. Ducis had yet to learn English ; and yet, though busy next with *Romeo and Juliet*, then with *Macbeth*, and anon with *Othello*, the idea of learning it seems never to have occurred to him.

De Quincey patriotically inveighed against “the wretched La Harpe,” for complaining of the Moor’s handkerchief as irretrievably mean. In the hands of a La Harpe he could not doubt that it would have proved so. But Shakspeare has so ennobled it by the wild grandeur of its history,—“That handkerchief did an Egyptian to my mother give,” etc.,—that De Quincey could no more regard it as M. La Harpe’s *mouchoir*, than the shattered and shredded banner of a veteran regiment as an old rag.

Francis Horner, while at Milan in 1814, was very much struck with the dramatic effect produced on the stage by certain graphic details of ordinary life, such as, he said, “would offend us in our opera or modern tragedy”—and he inferred the powerful aid afforded to any declamation that has strength in itself, by common trifles taken from common life ; referring, by way of illustrating and enforcing his meaning, to “those,

up to the extremity of rage and despair, through rapid but gradual transitions, in raising passion to its height from the smallest beginnings and in spite of all obstacles, in painting the expiring conflict between love and hatred, tenderness and resentment, jealousy and remorse, in unfolding the strength and weaknesses of our nature, in uniting sublimity of thought with the anguish of the keenest woe, in putting in motion the various impulses that agitate this our mortal being, and at last blending them in that noble tide of deep and sustained passion, impetuous and majestic, which "flows on to the Propontic, and knows no ebb," that Shakspeare, as William Hazlitt reads him, has shown the mastery of his genius and of his power over the human heart. And the third act of *Othello* is taken by this critic to be the poet's masterpiece, not of knowledge or passion separately, but of the two combined. And Walter Savage Landor, who not only preferred Shakspeare to every other poet, but thought he contains more poetry and more wisdom than all the rest put together, declared *Othello* to be "loftier than the citadel of Troy; and what a Paradise," he adds, glancing next at Milton after Homer, "fell before him!" "From *Othello* we *must* descend, whatever road we take." Nor in the whole compass of the Shakspearian pathos can Charles Knight discover anything deeper than "But yet the pity of it, Iago! Oh, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!" when the contemplated murder of Desdemona tears his heart.

Overbury speaks in his poem on *A Wife*, of

"The pangs of jealousy, when love doth find
More pain to doubt her false than know her so."

And there are phases of Othello's passion which seem to illustrate the paradox. He reminds us at times of what

familiarities and domestic details with which Shakspeare touches his highest passages," and which offend French critics more than a little, though more than a little they deepen the interest of English ones. Schiller, said Coleridge, has the material Sublime; to produce an effect, he sets you a whole town on fire, and throws infants with their mothers into the flames, or locks up a father in an old tower. But Shakspeare drops a handkerchief, and the same or greater effects follow.

Balzac says in his *Histoire des Treize*, that "Aucun homme n'est assez fort pour pouvoir supporter ces changements qui font passer rapidement l'âme du plus grand bien à des malheurs suprêmes. . . . Pour la première fois peut-être, dans un cœur d'homme, l'amour et la vengeance se mêlèrent si également qu'il était impossible de savoir qui de l'amour, qui de la vengeance l'emporterait." The French hero is but paraphrasing the Moor's resolve, "Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men," when he warns *his* Desdemona, "Vous pourriez abuser d'autres cœurs aussi enfants que l'est le mien, et je dois leur épargner ces douleurs. Vous m'avez donc inspiré une pensée de justice. Expiez votre faute ici-bas. Dieu vous pardonnera peut-être, je le souhaite ; mais il est implacable, et vous frappera." With a difference might be applied to this aggrieved declaimer, or better perhaps to the Moor himself, the resounding lines of no homicidal dupe :

"Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—

Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.
Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root."

A North British critic regards Othello's passion as injured pride struggling to get rid of boundless and unutterable affection, by cutting the tie at once and for ever. Jealousy, he remarks, supposes doubt ; it is a transition state—a state of struggle when the elements of strong hope, and stronger fear, contend for mastery ; and this point Shakespeare hurries over, Othello being very soon convinced of Desdemona's worthlessness, and certainty is no more jealousy than despair is doubt. "Othello is as indignant as if a man were to find himself, by some monstrous means, in love with an object which he knew and felt to be despicable." This, it is urged, is the feeling which spurs him to the murder : he at once loves and contemns the false one, so false and so fair. And therefore it is, that when the Moor believes himself betrayed, the occupations of his whole life "suddenly become burthensome and abhorred," and to him

the pillars of the moral world seem shaken. The struggle of "the noble Othello," Macaulay thus described: "His heart relents; but his hand is firm. He does nought in hate, but all in honour. He kisses the beautiful deceiver before he destroys her." Gentleman Waife, to glorify Shakspeare's art, supposes a swart-visaged, ill-looking foreigner in the dock, and counsel opening the case, and witnesses deposing. "O, horrible wretch!—a murderer—unmanly murderer!—a defenceless woman smothered by caitiff hands! Hang him up—hang him up!" Softly, whispers the Poet, and lifts the veil from the assassin's heart. It is the Moor of Venice. And "what jury now dare to find that criminal guilty? what judge now will put on the black cap? who now says, Hang him up—hang him up?" One might exclaim with Sophocles,

θῆαμα δ' εἰσὸς ψεῖ τάχα
Τοιοῦτον διὸν καὶ στυγῶντ' ἐποικτίσαι.

And this even though we accept the account of that quasi-Anglophile, the late Philarète Chasles, that "le naïf Othello devient une bête féroce; il rugit, il égorge, il rit et pleure en voyant le sang qu'il a versé." Calderon's jealous heroes, it has been said, may act as Othello, but of how immeasurably baser earth are they made! While Othello will charm, as by a fascination, to the end of the world, this class of tragedy in Calderon, although perhaps in it his power is most fully displayed, is only repulsive: we have none of that sunshine of human poetry, which, as Landor said, "makes the colour of blood less horrible;" we have only cruelty with no alleviation of pathos,—Othello's Moorish blood, but not Othello's human heart. That able German critic, Dr. Röttscher, in his *Cyklus dramatischer Charaktere*, points out how in Calderon it is the stain upon the honour which is avenged, while in Shakspeare it is the wronged love; and attributes this difference in the treatment to national distinctions,—honour being made the basis of passion in the Spanish case, and in the English, love. Mr. Lewes, in his treatise on the Spanish drama, charges the German critic with here confounding the limited art of Cal-

deron with the whole Spanish spirit. "It seems to me that had Calderon really been the great poet he is so often called, he would have given us a very different picture of the wronged and jealous husband. In Calderon, love has no voice ; honour is all in all ; and honour, according to the Spanish conception, so excessively objective in its tendency, is a thing external ; it depends on others : if others do not know you to be dishonoured, you are not. Gutierre, in *The Physician of his own Honour*, has no good grounds for his suspicion ; he has not the overwhelming proofs which drive Othello wild. Othello does not act upon the belief of another as if it were law ; he acts, as Mr. Lewes demonstrates, "only after the most damning proofs have been accumulated, and after a fearful struggle within himself." He demands proofs ; they are furnished ; and even after the conviction of his wrong has been forced upon him, he has recurrences of doubts and tenderness. "His suffering is wholly subjective ; nothing can rid his bosom of that perilous stuff. Life is henceforth a blank ; his occupation's gone." So again with the *Romero* of Joanna Baillie, skilful in developing all the mean and revolting features of the passion of jealousy,—not arising, as in Othello, in a noble, open, trustful nature, and borne in upon the mind, said Jeffrey, against its will, by villany and the force of strong circumstance,—but springing innate and ineradicable in a constitutionally suspicious mind, and, like a rank weed, over-running the whole heart.

The nature of Othello, as Professor Dowden reads it, is free and open ; he looks upon men with a gaze too large and royal to suspect them of malignity and fraud ; he is a man "not easily jealous." He has, however, a sense of his own inefficiency in dealing with the complex and subtle conditions of life in his adopted country. Where all is plain and broad, he relies upon his own judgment and energy ; he is a master of simple, commanding action. But for curious inquiry into complex facts he has no faculty ; he loses his bearings ; "being wrought upon," he is "perplexed in the extreme." Then, too, adds the critic, his hot

Mauritanian blood mounts quickly to the point of boiling. "If he be infected, the poison hurries through his veins, and he rages in his agony." Special affinities are suggested between the soul of Othello, and the lion of his ancestral desert.

Henri Beyle (De Stendhal) pronounces Voltaire's Zaïre to be a mere thin and washed-out copy of the terrible Moor of Venice. Nor was Villemain prepared to deny that, of the two, Shakspeare's was here the profounder art, as well as superiority in *le naturel, l'ardeur, la vérité*. Othello's is in kind and degree the nobler madness. *Τίς δ', ὦ τλήμων, προσέβη μανία*; as the Chorus exclaim in Sophocles; or as in Euripides, *ὦ τλήμων, ὥς σοι δύσφορ' ἐργασται κακά*.

"Not his the light war with its feeble rage
Which prudent scruples with faint passions wage,
But that known only to man's franker state;
In love a demigod—a fiend in hate,
Him, not the reason but the instincts lead,
Prompt in the impulse, ruthless in the deed."

§ II.

DESDEMONA.

LORD SHAFTESBURY, of the *Characteristics*, "can't imagine" why Shakspeare, "amongst his Greek names," should have chosen for the gentle lady wedded to the Moor "one which denoted the Lady Superstition;" unless, indeed, "as poets are sometimes prophets too, he should figuratively, under this dark type, have represented to us, That about a hundred years after his time, the fair sex of this island should, by other monstrous tales [like Othello's] be so seduced, as to turn their favour chiefly on the person of the tale-tellers; and change their natural inclination for fair, candid, and courteous knights, into a passion for a mysterious race of black enchanters; such as of old were said to creep into houses, and lead captive silly women."

His lordship's drift is pretty obvious to his readers, but we are concerned only with his mention of Desdemona, whom he contemptuously pities for listening to the Moor's "woful tale, unfit, one would think, to win a tender fair one. It's true, the poet sufficiently condemns her fancy ; and makes her (poor lady!) pay dearly for it, in the end." The poet himself was far too much out of Shaftesbury's line of thought, and far too high above his level of criticism, for either Desdemona or Othello to be understood or cared for by such a critic. Byron was scarcely more flippant on the subject, when he said, *apropos* of Venetian ladies:

" Shakspeare described the sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day, from Venice to Verona,
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since that time there was never known a
Husband whom mere suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a ' cavalier servente.' "

There have been uncritical critics in whose eyes, apparently, Brabantio's daughter was a mere lovesick fool, bewitched as grossly as Brabantio himself would have made her out to be, as though she might almost deserve consignment to the category in Butler's couplet, with its Hudibrastic rhyme :

" Some with the dev'l himself in league grow,
By's representative a negro."

One might fancy they had taken their impression of her from Iago's sallies on the sex at large ; and Iago, says the elder Schlegel, does not merely pretend an obdurate incredulity as to the virtue of women, he actually entertains it ; and as in every thing he sees merely the hateful side, he dissolves in the rudest manner the charm which imagination casts over the relation between the two sexes ; and this he does for the purpose of revolting Othello's senses, whose heart might otherwise have easily convinced him of Desdemona's innocence. Schlegel's own impression as to the character of Desdemona is, that of "a sacrifice

without blemish." She is not, he admits, a high ideal representation of sweetness and enthusiastic passion like Juliet ; but she is full of simplicity, softness, and humility, and so innocent, that she can hardly form to herself an idea of the possibility of unfaithfulness, and thus seems calculated to make the most yielding and the tenderest of wives. "The female propensity wholly to resign oneself to an alien influence has led her into the one fault of her life, that of marrying without her father's consent. Her choice seems wrong ; and yet she has been gained over to Othello by that which induces woman to honour in man her protector and guide,—admiration of his determined heroism, and compassion for the sufferings which he had undergone." A Quarterly Reviewer compares with her Scott's Amy Robsart : the basis of the character is conjugal love, and the charm consists in its purity and its devotedness, the fault springs from its undue prevalence over filial duty, while the sufferings are occasioned by the perverted passions of him to whom it is devoted. An American critic describes what he terms "a splendid contrast" because the characters of Othello and Desdemona as developed in time of trial : *he* surrendering his generous and confiding spirit to the craft of a subtle intellect, and suffering himself to be betrayed out of the moral region of faith into the cold atmosphere of doubts and questionings and proofs ; the sustaining principle of his nature has perished, for it is against his nature that convictions have overwhelmed him : *she*, on the other hand, trusting to her own pure impulses, still clings to her faith ; and by virtue of it alone, in opposition to all that her senses and her understanding show her, she is wise as well as innocent. "She will not believe even what she sees, but with the most irresistible tenderness of conscious purity, invents excuses for her husband's violence,"—something of state has vexed him, and "puddled his clear spirit." She scarcely doubts her husband being in the right, and only questions her own behaviour ; and she seems to have no fear that, come what may, her love to him can be weak-

ened: Unkindness may do much, and his unkindness may defeat her life, but never taint her love. She is "subdued even to the very quality of her lord." Marvellous, by Hazlitt's estimate, is the truth of conception with which timidity and boldness are united in the same character. The extravagance of her resolutions, the pertinacity of her affections, he traces direct to the gentleness of her nature, implying as they do an unreserved reliance on the purity of her own intentions, an entire surrender of her fears to her love, a knitting of herself (heart and soul) to the fate of another. "Bating the commencement of her passion, which is a little fantastical and headstrong, her whole character consists in having no will of her own, no prompter but her obedience." When Iago characterizes her as "too gentle," "Nay, that's certain," assents the Moor; nor do her resignation and angelic sweetness of temper desert her at the last. As Mrs. Jameson sees gathered around Hermione all that can render sorrow majestic, so she sees assembled round Desdemona all that can render misery heart-breaking. If the wronged but self-sustained virtue of Hermione commands our veneration, the injured and defenceless innocence of Desdemona so wrings the soul, "that all for pity we could die." Not but that Desdemona displays at times a transient energy arising from the power of affection; but "gentleness" gives the prevailing tone to the character. Mrs. Jameson remarks that the "soft credulity" of Desdemona, whose turn for the marvellous, whose susceptible imagination had first directed her thoughts and affections to Othello, is precisely the woman to be frightened out of her sense by such a tale as the Moor told her of magic in the web of the missing handkerchief,—and so to be betrayed by her fears into a momentary tergiversation. "It is most natural in such a being, and shows us that even in the sweetest natures, without moral energy, there can be no completeness and consistency." Endued with that temper which is the origin of superstition in love as in religion,—which, in

fact, makes love itself a religion,—she not only does not utter an upbraiding word, but nothing that Othello does or says, no outrage, no injustice, can tear away the charm with which her imagination had invested him, or impair her faith in his honour. In the character of Desdemona is justly said to lie the source of the pathos throughout—of that pathos which at once softens and deepens the tragic effect:—no woman differently constituted could have excited the same intense and painful compassion, without losing something of that exalted charm which invests her from beginning to end, which we are apt to impute to the interest of situation, and to the poetical colouring, but which lies, in fact, in the very essence of the character. “Desdemona, with all her timid flexibility and soft acquiescence, is not weak; for the negative alone is weak, and the mere presence of goodness and affection implies in itself a species of power;—power without consciousness, power without effort, power with repose—that soul of grace!” The late George Brimley declared Desdemona to be the only thoroughly charming wife whom Shakspeare represents. Mr. Thackeray, rather on the other hand, taking note of her apparently complacent perception of the Lieutenant’s partiality for her, was free to own, parenthetically, “And I for my part believe that many more things took place in that sad affair than the worthy Moorish officer ever knew of.” Vinet calls Zaïre “much more virtuous” than Desdemona, “for she struggles against her love.” But he admits that Desdemona is conceived with an ideal grace, a poetical charm, not to be found to the same extent in Zaïre. *The gentle Lady married to the Moor*,—Wordsworth’s famous line,—has been characterized by one of his most admiring critics as eminently characteristic of the poet’s turn of thought; for it is not the agony of passion, nor the subtle working of the insidious poison, nor the diabolic revelation of concentrated coiled malignity, that Wordsworth dwells on, as distinctive excellences of the play, but the gentleness of the victim attracts and fascinates

him. "In all that mighty symphony of maidenly admiration, of manly love, of stately age, of vigorous youth, of calm domestic peace, of 'the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,' of boundless faith, of agonizing jealousy, of wrath, hate, fondness, and despair, all blending into one complex devouring passion, he hears but the simple melody of the flute. In that woof of death shot over with all the glorious and changing hues of life, he sees but one simple flower blooming by a grass-green grave." Mr. Grant White defends the great Dusseldorf artist's conception of Desdemona, and denies that Hildebrandt has made her too womanly, too earnest, too passionate, too splendid. Because her father speaks of her "delicate youth," calls her a "maiden never bold, of spirit still and quiet," and says she was so opposed to marriage that she made a point of shunning the eligible bachelors of beautiful Venice, some seem to think her a "good little girl, who spoke when spoken to, said 'sir,' washed the cups and saucers after breakfast, and had serious thoughts of entering a convent." They seem to forget, what Shakspeare's Scholar is prompt to remind them of, that Desdemona was noteworthy for "high and plenteous wit and invention,"—that she speaks up before the Senate, and speaks out, too, bravely, loyally, resolutely. Calm self-reliance, deep emotion, and an earnest nature, are not inconsistent with youth, modesty, a quiet spirit, and indifference to all suitors save one. The very fact that Desdemona gave her love, unasked, to a mature man, a famous captain, one rude in speech and martial in mien, is claimed to show why she shunned the wealthy, curled darlings all around her. To illustrate the maxim that "in joining contrasts lieth love's delight," the lover in, the *Hunchback* surmises that

"Haply for this, on Afric's swarthy neck,
Hath Europe's priceless pearl been seen to hang,
That makes the orient poor"—

and we bethink us of Brabantio's daughter and the Moor, as well as of a "rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear." A yet more

popular playright of the same generation has told us in one of his metrical romances, that

“ Ev’n as the young Venetian loved the Moor,
Pity refines to reverence in the Pure ;
Touch’d with a finer sense, its eye surveys
The mine, where wastes appal the common gaze :
Love in such hearts, like some sweet poet, where
Round it the homely dwells, invents the fair ;
To rudest forms, its own bright splendour given,
It shapes the seraph and creates the heaven.”

Shakspeare’s Scholar, already quoted, describes in Desdemona a girl of vivid imagination, quiet self-reliance, much tenderness, and unbounded devotion, who had attained to early womanhood without the influence of a mother’s counsel—for we hear nowhere of her mother ; and being such a one, she becomes, as such women ever do, “subdued to the very quality of her lord.” She shows herself, in her conduct to him, almost the very opposite of what she was to all others, and gives up for him her station, her father’s love, her happiness, and finally her very life itself, almost without a question or a murmur. “Le pathétique du drame, n’est-ce pas que cette jeune fille qui a tout donné, tout quitté, aimé malgré tous les obstacles, aimé le More de Venise, soit tuée pas lui, comme infidèle ?” So writes Villemain, in a comparison of her with Zaire, whose *dignité coquette* he contrasts with the bearing of Desdemona, a fugitive from her father’s house, and following her husband now to plead before the Senate, and now to confront the stir and stress of war,—*si soumise, si dévouée à son amour*.

How Desdemona came to be smitten of the Moor, he has told us who best could tell, the Moor himself. We have seen how Shaftesbury regarded the process, and might quote much more from him, equally unsympathetic with “our old Tragick Poet,” as he is pleased to designate Shakspeare, who, sarcastically says he, “hit our [national] taste in giving us a Moorish hero, full fraught with prodigy : a wondrous storyteller ! But, for the attentive part, the poet chose to give

it to womankind. What passionate reader of travels, or student in the prodigious sciences, can refuse to pity that fair lady, who fell in love with the miraculous Moor ; especially considering with what suitable grace such a lover could relate the most monstrous adventures, and satisfy the wondering appetite with the most wondrous tales." But it is to be noted that Shaftesbury, to serve his purpose, quotes, not the lines which refer to Othello's personal prowess and endurance, but those only which tell of antres vast, and deserts idle, and cannibals, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders ; as though it were by Munchausenisms that Desdemona had been won, not by admiring sympathy with the soldier's feats and sufferings, which in fact are by this critic ignored. What she loved Othello for, was the dangers he had passed, and his manner of passing them. And he loved her that she did pity them, and for her way of showing it. Was not Uncle Toby even thus enamoured of the Widow Wadman, when she engaged him to fight his battles o'er again, again to take the counter-guard of St. Roche sword in hand,—and when, with tender notes playing upon his ear, that too bewitching matron, professing herself a bewitched listener, led him, all bleeding, by the hand, out of the trench, wiping her eyes as he was carried to his tent, why, Captain Shandy saw an angel of mercy beside him on the sofa, "his heart glowed with fire ; and had he been worth a thousand, he had lost every heart of them to Mrs. Wadman." Mr. Charles Reade shrewdly makes David Dodd, as a narrator, not merely present the bare skeletons of daring acts, but those smaller touches that are the body and soul of a story true or false, wanting which the deeds of heroes sound an almanack ; not merely tell what men acted, but what they felt, what passed in the hearts of men perishing at sea, in sight of land, and in the hearts of the heroes that ran their boats into the surf and Death's maw to save them : "Such great acts, great feelings, great perils, and the gushes that crowned all of holy triumph, . . . this seaman poured hot from his own manly heart into quick and womanly bosoms, that heaved

visibly and glowed with admiring sympathy and fluttered with gentle fear.* In another of this vivid writer's fictions we read of another hero and other listeners, after the challenging query, Who is so devoid of egotism as not to like to tell his own adventures to sympathizing beauty? that "He told his story in detail, . . . and as he told it, their lovely eyes seemed on fire; and they were red and pale, by turns." Mrs. Gore's Emma Cromer is to be seen turning "deathly pale" at Reresby's recital of eastern travel, and laying a cold and tremulous hand on the arm of another fair listener. But it is pretty much the same with her, apparently, as with Scott's Matilda, when Redmond

"knew so well o'er all to throw
His spirit's wild romantic glow,
That while she blamed, and while she fear'd,
She loved each venturous tale she heard."

Not to compare her too closely with one of whom Coleridge ecstatically wrote,

"Few sorrows hath she of her own.
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best, whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve."

In the case of M. Soulié's Victor and Julie, "Julie l'écoutait, et comme Desdemona, elle l'aimait pour ce qu'il avait souffert." So with Captain Kirke and Magdalen in *No Name*, when she led him into talking of the perils of the sea: twice he had been shipwrecked; times innumerable he and all with him had been threatened with death, and had escaped their doom by the narrowness of the hair's breadth; and she would sit listening to him with a breathless interest, looking at him with a breathless wonder, as those fearful stories—made doubly vivid by the simple language in which he told them—fell, one by one, from his lips. She was enamoured

* Miss Austen's readers may call to mind "the glow of Fanny's cheek," in *Mansfield Park*, "the brightness of her eye, the deep attention, the absorbed interest," with which she listened to the young sailor's description of the imminent hazards and terrific scenes which his experience afloat, in war-time, could supply in satisfaction of almost any demand.

of his "noble unconsciousness of his own heroism," the artless modesty with which he described his own acts of dauntless endurance and devoted courage, without an idea that they were anything more than plain acts of duty to which he was bound by the vocation that he followed. What though the man was no youngster, and no beauty? The author of the *Parisians* assures us that beauty has little to do with engaging the love of women: the air, the manner, the tone, the conversation, the something that interests, and the something to be proud of—these are the attributes of the man made to be loved. Happy the warrior that is sure of one loving listener when the hurly-burly's done, when the battle's lost and won.

"Welcome nights of broken sleep, and days of carnage cold,
Could I deem that thou would'st weep to hear my perils told."

The love of Dido for Æneas has been defined as a thing of the imagination, an impulse of genuine hero-worship, owing more to the ear than to the eye: it was excited by his narrative of the sack of Troy, and his subsequent wanderings over the melancholy main. "It resembled the passion of Othello for Desdemona," says one Virgilian critic. A love born of pity speaks in the first words of the tempest-tried hero: *O sola infandos Trojæ miserata labores.*

* * * * *

If in one sense it be taking us still further away from Othello and Desdemona, in another it may help to bring us back to them, if we apply, in conclusion, these four lines from *Idylls of the King*,—

"However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,
And bruised, and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom."

§ III.

OTHELLO'S ONLY WITCHCRAFT.

Othello, Act i., Sc. 3.

THAT Brabantio's daughter, a Venetian senator's only child, should become enamoured of a sooty Moor,—to what could Brabantio in his proud wrath impute it, but to the use of foul charms and chains of magic? There was witchcraft in the case, he felt quite sure. How else could ever a maid so tender, fair, and happy, so fond of her father and her home, and “so opposite to marriage that she shunned the wealthy curled darlings” of her own nation, have run from her endeared surroundings to the “sooty bosom of such a thing” as this shady foreigner? Nigger* was not a phrase current

* Was Othello a negro? The question has been put at divers times, and answered in sundry manners. A. W. Schlegel hails as a most “fortunate mistake” that the Moor (under which name in the original novel a baptized Saracen of the northern coast of Africa was unquestionably meant) has been made by Shakspeare “in every respect a negro” —recognizing in him, as we are made to do, the wild nature of that glowing zone which generates the most ferocious birds of prey and the deadliest poisons—tamed only in appearance by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honour, and by nobler and milder manners. Commenting on the term “thick-lips” as applied to him by Roderigo, Coleridge asks if it be possible to imagine Shakspeare so utterly ignorant as to make a barbarous negro plead royal birth,—at a time, too, when negroes were not known except as slaves? The rivalry of Roderigo may sufficiently account for his wilful confusion of Moor and Negro. Though no doubt Desdemona saw Othello's visage in his mind, yet would it be “something monstrous to conceive this beautiful Venetian girl falling in love with a veritable negro,” and would argue in her a disproportionateness, a want of balance, which Shakspeare does not appear to have in the least contemplated. So again the late Professor H. Reed rejected the “repulsive notion” that Othello was a black, a coarse-featured African, as directly at variance with the requisitions of both poetry and history: the Moor he claimed as one of that adventurous race of men who, striking out from the heart of Arabia, had made conquest of Persia and Syria, and, overturning the ancient sovereignty of Egypt, swept in victory along the whole northern coast of Africa, and passing thence across the narrow frith of the Mediterranean, scattered the dynasty of the Goths with

in Venetian society, high or low ; but nigger was in Brabantio's mind's eye when it lighted on Othello's face, and perhaps would have been on his lips had he sounded the depths of its future capacity as an expression of arrogant contempt and vituperative insult. This Moor, then, he charged before the Senate with practising on Desdemona with unlawful acts, abusing her delicate youth with drugs

Roderick at their head ; who in the most fertile region of Spain built up an empire which lasted for centuries ; who preserved the literature of Greece—its philosophy and science—when Greece herself was prostrate and benighted ; and who, even after the powers of the caliphs in their several realms began to decline, were the chosen and honoured captains of the armies of Christian states. Especially, we read, was this the policy of the Venetian Republic, to lessen by the employment of mercenary commanders the danger of domestic intrigue. How true then to his nature was it for Othello to “stand in conscious pride—the descendant of a race of kings—the representative of the Arabs who had been sovereigns in Europe—his spirit glowing with noble ancestral memories.” On the other hand, it is shown to have been perfectly consistent with the debasing malignity of Iago, and with the petulant disappointment of such a foppish Venetian as Roderigo, to be blind to all that ennobled and dignified the Moorish name—to see no distinction between the chivalrous Moor, the chieftain of Christian armies, and the barbarous Ethiop, the despised slave. “It was natural that vulgar words should be uttered from the lips of such men, and also that the parental frenzy of Desdemona's father should find relief in the same strain of vituperative misrepresentation—the propensity of a fresh and angry grief to magnify its injury.” And such are the assignable authorities which have led to the supposition that Othello was black. If the Moor does, indeed, so speak of himself in one scene, it is when he is “changing with the poison,” and the agony of doubt incites him to morbid exaggeration. For the sake of the gentle lady wedded to the Moor it is pleaded that we should by all means discard the blackamoor fallacy—lest we be tempted to think, otherwise, that so monstrous an alliance was fitly blotted out in its fearful catastrophe.

Black is a colour with a large variety of shades ; and a variety of meanings may be assigned to it, sometimes simply the converse of light-complexioned, or fair, as when Thurio, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, denies that his face is fair, and asserts it to be “black”—whereupon Sir Proteus airily replies,

“But pearls are fair ; and the old saying is,
Black men are pearls in beauteous ladies' eyes,”

Christopher North favoured the negro notion when he argued, in the

or minerals, enchanting her with noxious spells and medicines bought of mountebanks.* Let him deny it, if he could.

Deny it, Othello did. True, he had won the love of Desdemona ; true, he had married. But that was the full extent of his offending. He would tell the Senate, and in plain soldierly terms, like the plain soldier he was, how it all came about. He would tell them a round unvarnished tale of his whole course of love ; what drugs, what charms,

Noctes, that Shakspeare ought to have been above taking an anomalous case of jealousy ; for "how could a black husband escape being jealous of a white wife? There was a cause of jealousy given in his very fate." And the Ettrick Shepherd pitied, but could scarcely respect, the white wife,—“it was a curious kind o’ hankerin’ after an opposite colour.” With better judgment one who, in his time, contributed to the *Noctes*, Hartley Coleridge to wit, scouted the error which has turned Othello, the sable Mauritanian chieftain, haply descended from the vanquishers of Roderick the Goth, into a rank, woolly-pated, thick-lipped “nigger.” Kemble asked Blumenbach, who had been to see the great tragedian in Othello, “Do you think, sir, that I succeeded in accurately representing the negro character?” “The moral characteristics, yes ; but all my illusion was at an end when you opened your hands ; you wore black gloves—now the negroes have the inside of the hand flesh-colour.” Every one laughed, but the ethnologist was profoundly serious. Cooper was found fault with by some American critics (ridiculed in *Salmagundi*) for not having made himself as black as a negro ; one objector urging that the Moor was probably an Egyptian by birth—like the donor of the too famous handkerchief—and has not Herodotus described the flat noses and frizzled hair of the Egyptians ? a clear proof that they were all negroes. It is one of America’s best critics, that self-styled Shakspeare’s Scholar, Mr. R. Grant White, who finds one fatal fault in Hildebrandt’s otherwise “most fascinating of modern pictures,” the Othello and Desdemona,—and that is, the notion of love given by such a woman to a great grinning negro with rings in his ears. What though John Quincy Adams essayed to prove Othello to be a negro, and that Retsch made him so in his outlines ? Shakspeare’s Scholar falls back upon the evidence of his master that “the Moor” was a Mauritanian, and one of lofty lineage. Neither Othello nor Aaron (in the horrible *Titus Andronicus*) is called an Ethiopian, but both are continually spoken of as Moors. To Mr. Grant White it seems, on the whole, that Shakspeare must have been fully aware of the distinction in grade between the two races, though his notion of their respective traits may have been neither very true nor very clear.

* Compare the very words as well as the general drift of a passage in

what conjuration, and what mighty magic, he won this maiden with. Brabantio might interrupt him with renewed assertions that so still and diffident a girl could never have fallen in love with what she feared to look on, unless by "practices of cunning hell;" and therefore he vouched again that with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood, or with some dram conjured to this effect, the Moor must needs have wrought upon her. But the Senate ruled that to vouch this, was no proof; and they encouraged the defendant in his pleading. That pleading was, that his life's history, simply told, but filled throughout with adventure and excitement, with records of disastrous chances and moving accidents and hair-breadth escapes, had irresistibly won the ear, and through the ear the heart, of Desdemona.

"She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd;
And I loved her that she did pity them.
This only is the witchcraft I have used."

old John Webster's best-known tragedy, where Duke Ferdinand and Bosola are discussing the infatuation of the Duchess of Malfi:

Bos. I do suspect there hath been some sorcery
Used on the duchess.
Ferd. Sorcery! to what purpose?
Bos. To make her dote on some desertless fellow
She shames to acknowledge.
Ferd. Can your faith give way
To think there's power in potions or in charms,
To make us love whether we will or no?
Bos. Most certainly.
Ferd. Away! these are mere gulleries, horrid things
Invented by some cheating mountebanks
To abuse us. Do you think that herbs or charms
Can force the will? Some trials have been made
In this foolish practice, but the ingredients
Were lenitive poisons, such as are of force
To make the patient mad; and straight the witch
Swears by equivocation they are in love.
The witchcraft lies in her rank blood."

Duchess of Malfi, Act iii., Sc. 1.

When Mistress Quickly can only account for the alleged infatuation of Mistress Ford for Sir John Falstaff by ascribing to the fat knight the possession and unscrupulous exercise of "charms," "Not I, I assure thee," he complacently replies; "setting the attraction of my good parts aside I have no other charms."—*Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act ii., Sc. 2.

Othello's argument admits of a large variety of application; and we go on—or off rather, as at a tangent—to apply it accordingly.

Camden, in his *Britannia*, treating of Michael Scott and his connection with the abbey of Ulme, or Holme Cultram, in Cumberland, says of that alleged wizard, "He was a monk of this place about the year 1290, and applied himself so closely to the mathematics and other abstruse parts of learning, that he was generally looked on as a conjurer; and a vain credulous humour has handed down I know not what miracles done by him." And in this respect Sir Michael is a representative man. No sorcerer, after all, it seems, but only a *savant*. Many are the sages and *savants*—one Pope at least among them—who have passed for sorcerers. Gabriel Naudé was not writing without cause to show for it, when he drew up his *Apologie pour les grands Personnages faussement accusés de Magie*.

Referring to the skill in divination ascribed to St. Athanasius, Gibbon remarks, that some fortunate conjectures of future events, which impartial reasoners might impute to his experience and judgment, were attributed by his friends to heavenly inspiration, and by his enemies to infernal magic. The ascendancy acquired by Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, over the mind of the Emperor Constantine, was imputed by the pagans to the art of magic; but the prelate might with a good conscience have replied, as Molière's Célie does to Trufaldin:

"*Truf.* Quoi! te mêlerais-tu d'un peu de diablerie?

Célie. Non, tout ce que je sais n'est que blanche magie."

Strong minds have undoubtedly an ascendant over weak ones, says my Lord Chesterfield, "as Galigai Maréchale d'Ancre very justly observed, when, to the disgrace and reproach of those times, she was executed for having governed Mary of Medicis by the arts of witchcraft and magic." The profound devotion of "that lofty female," as Dean Milman calls her, the Countess Matilda, to her spiritual father, Hildebrand, was attributed to magic by some, by

others to as bad or worse. But, at the worst, the ascendancy was gained

“With witchcraft of his wit. . . .
O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!”

That only was the witchcraft he had used. So with the Platonic philosopher Apuleius, whose marriage with a rich widow, Pudentilla, provoked the lady's relations to set up a charge against him of bringing about the match by sorcery. The spirited defence he made is still extant in his *Apology*, or *Oratio de Magia*. To quote Lord Chesterfield again: “The most graceful and best-bred men, and the handsomest and genteelest women, give the most philtres, and, as I verily believe, without the least assistance of the devil.”* The too-celebrated Countess of Essex, who had recourse to Simon Forman, wizard and astrologer, for certain powders to be administered to her husband and to Somerset, is said to have credulously observed with admiration the effect of them; although, as Mr. Kemp remarks, the licentious passion of the one which she encouraged, and her coldness towards the other, were quite sufficient to fan the lawless flame on one side, and extinguish conjugal affection on the other, without the aid of the Sidrophel of Lambeth.

Of Mary Stuart's infatuation for Bothwell, in 1567,—when, instead of opening her eyes to the perils of her position, she seems to have resigned herself to the influence of that one engrossing passion,—Mr. Tytler observes, that “her history at this moment hurried forward with something so like an irresistible fatality, as to make it currently reported

* At the Weimar theatre, in 1805, Mr. H. Crabb Robinson saw that “wonder of the North and object of every one's idolatry here,” the hereditary Princess of Saxe-Weimar; and thus he comments on the impression made upon himself by the young and fascinating lady: “I stood by her some time, and smiled at myself at remarking the effect she had on me—since, excellent as I doubt not she is, I am still sensible that the strange sensation I felt at hearing her say common things was principally occasioned by the magic of title and name.”—*Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson*, vol. i., p. 210.

amongst the people that Bothwell was dealing in love-philtres, and had employed the sorceries of his old paramour, the Lady Buccleuch." But that old sorceress knew better, and so did the bold bad man by whom Mary was bewitched.

When the ministers of the kirk, enjoined to proclaim the banns of the Queen's marriage with Bothwell, peremptorily refused, and when the undaunted Craig denounced the match from the pulpit of the High Church as "odious and slanderous to the world," the same historian remarks that "this solemn warning, with the deep and general detestation of Bothwell, appeared to produce so little effect upon the Queen, that the people considered the whole events as strange and supernatural: the report revived of this abandoned man having employed witchcraft, no uncommon resource in that age; and it was currently asserted that the marriage-day had been fixed by sorcerers."

It is noteworthy that Queen Mary herself accused John Knox of accomplishing his seditious purposes to the prejudice of her authority, and the disquieting of her realm, by magical arts. To this "heavy charge" Knox answered, that "the slander of practising magic—an art which he had always condemned—he could more easily bear, when he recollected that his Master had been defamed as one in league with Beelzebub." In a subsequent interview with the reformer, we find Mary telling him, in a conversation betokening, says Dr. M'Crie, "the greatest familiarity and apparent confidence," that "Lord Ruthven had offered her a ring; but she could not love that nobleman. She knew that he used enchantment." Knox's biographer appends to his record of the reformer's second marriage, with Margaret Stewart, an account of the splenetic reports raised at the time by "the popish writers," who envied the honours of the Scottish reformer, and who "are quite clear, too, that he gained the heart of the young lady by means of sorcery and the assistance of the devil." The fascination exercised at will by Mary herself, when long past her prime, was of a kind which set one of our foremost essayists to work out the problem, How is it that the belle of eighteen is often

deserted for the woman of forty, and that the patent witchery of youth and prettiness goes for nothing against the latent witchery of a mature siren? What is the secret? he asks: how is it done? The world, even of silly girls, has got past any belief in spells and talismans, such as Charlemagne's mistress wore, and yet the man's fascination seems to them quite as miraculous and almost as unholy as if it had been brought about by the black art. "If they had any analytical power, they would understand the *diablerie* of the mature sirens clearly enough, for it is not so difficult to understand when one puts one's mind to it." Riper knowledge of the world, a suavity of manner and "moral flexibility, wholly wanting to the young," enlarged sympathy, and cultivated tact, and colloquial ease and skill,—these, and such as these, are the witchcrafts the elder charmers use; such as these, if not these only.

Glancing here and there at the miscellanies of history for examples to our purpose, we think of the submission of Attila to Pope Leo, whose dauntless confidence and venerable aspect made so profound an impression upon him, as attributed by legend to a visible apparition of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, who "menaced the trembling heathen with a speedy divine judgment if he repelled the proposals of their successor." But this materializing view, to adopt the objections of the historian of Latin Christianity, though it may have heightened the beauty of Raffaele's painting, by the introduction of preterhuman forms, lowers the moral grandeur of the whole transaction. The simple faith in his God, which, says Dean Milman, "gave the Roman pontiff courage to "confront" the barbarian king, "is far more christianly sublime than this unnecessarily imagined miracle." De Quincey alleges of Christianity, as the last of revelations, that it had the high prerogative of working out its victory through what is greatest in man—through his reason, his will, his affections; but, to satisfy certain of the Fathers, it must operate like a drug—like sympathetic powders—like an amulet—or like a conjurer's charm. Applicable, again, from another point of view, is the instance of St. Dominic's

rare power of infusing a profound and enduring devotion to one object. "Once within the magic circle, the enthralled disciple lost all desire to leave it," so potent was the master's holy art, which was believed to be miracle. So, again, with his rival saint, the founder of the Franciscan order, and to whom so many miracles are ascribed, but the moral miracle of whose self-sacrificing love is now recognized as the main-spring of success. As one of Corneille's heroes puts it,

"Tout miracle est facile où mon amour s'applique."

When the Scheldt bridge was completed, in 1585, the famous bridge of Parma, which has been advantageously compared with the celebrated Rhine bridge of Julius Cæsar, the citizens of Antwerp could hardly believe that the structure had been reared by human agency, but loudly protested that invisible demons had been summoned to plan and perfect this fatal and preterhuman work. "They were wrong," says Mr. Motley. "There had been but one demon—one clear lofty intelligence, inspiring a steady and untiring hand. The demon was the intellect of Alexander Farnese;" which, however, had been assisted in its labour by the hundred devils of envy and discord rife in the ranks of his foes. It was as with the Corsair captain of the poet—that Conrad whose name appalled the fiercest of his crew, and swayed their souls with that commanding art which leads and dazzles the vulgar :

"What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain ?
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind ?
The power of Thought—the magic of the Mind !"

It is Mr. Motley again, who, having to treat of Lerma's influence over Philip III., says, "the people thought their monarch bewitched." But the all-grasping favourite was no wizard ; only an adventurer with his wits about him. Sorcerer he was not, nor much of a sage, but very much a shrewd man of business, with a will of his own, and tact to enforce it on one who had none. The unbounded rapacity of the Duke is the evil element in this case. Had he been a disinterested minister, his ascendancy might have been as

salutary to Spain as in fact it was the reverse ; and then might one have said of it, with Leontes in the statue scene,

“ If this be magic, let it be an art
Lawful as eating.”

The celebrated Thomas Hamilton, Earl of Haddington, President of the Court of Session, and Secretary of State for Scotland, was nicknamed by his sovereign, from the place of his residence, ‘Tam o’ the Cowgate,’ under which title he is said to be now better remembered than by any other. Him James I. visited, when in Scotland in 1617 ; and very rich the King found the old statesman, whom, on that account, popular rumour accredited with the actual possession of the philosopher’s stone ; there being “ no other feasible mode of accounting for his immense wealth, which rather seemed the effect of supernatural agency than of worldly prudence or talent.” It seems that King James, was vastly tickled with the idea of the philosopher’s stone and of so enviable a talisman having fallen into the hands of a Scottish judge ; so His Majesty took care to let his trusty old friend and gossip know of the rumours afloat. The Lord President, we are told, immediately invited the King, and the rest of the company present, to come and dine with him next day, when he would lay open to them the mystery of the talisman in question.* Next day saw his Cowgate palazzo thronged with the invited guests, all of whom his lordship gratified with a dainty repast. That over, James reminded Tam of his philosopher’s stone, and declared himself to be on the tenterhooks of expectation till the mystery should be solved. The President then addressed King and courtiers in a pithy speech, whereof the peroration explained that his whole secret lay in two simple and familiar maxims : “Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day ;”

* The story may remind some of Crawford the successful painter, in a popular work of fiction : men came offering him monstrous bribes for the revelation of his “secret.” He smiled at their ignorance : he had no secret except his genius, and his mystic cabala lay in the two virtues that had made the law of his life—unremitting industry, undeviating temperance.

and "Never trust to another's hand what your own can execute." One of Sir Robert Walpole's most virulent critics ascribed his ascendancy to "some secret magic, of which he seemed to have been a perfect master,"—which magic is prosaically resolved into his skill in finance and debate, his perspicuity of statement, and his plain good sense.

French traders are said to have a proverb about English "luck," and to believe that in commerce we are specially fortunate; nay, some of the more pious among them have been quoted as going so far as to say that, since we renounced the Pope, the devil has made us exceptionally "lucky," he being the prince of this world. "But our hard-working, long-sighted merchants know much better: their theory of chance is that the best ship takes merchandize the most safely and most quickly, and that the best seamanship saves the ship from being wrecked much more than 'luck' does." Harapha, the giant of Gath, in *Samson Agonistes*, twits the blinded hero with having gained his miraculous strength by "black enchantments, some magician's art," and is thus answered:

"I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the living God, who gave me
At my nativity this strength."

Urbain Grandier, as the shrewd soldier says in *Vingt Ans après*, was not a sorcerer; he was a *savant*, and that is quite another thing. "Urbain Grandier did not foretell the future; he was acquainted with the past, which is sometimes much worse." One of the nuns who were implicated in the dismal Grandier *procès*, on avowing solemnly the innocence of the condemned priest, was taunted by M. de Laubordemont with speaking at the instigation of the devil. But, remorseful at her share in bringing about Grandier's condemnation, she answered that she had never been possessed of any demon—as all the nuns of Loudun on their own showing were—excepting the demon of revenge, and that it was no magical compact, but her own evil thoughts,*

* So when one of the gossips in Scott's *Highland Widow* is accusing

which had led to at least *her* demoniacal possession. When three or four students at the University of Jena were poisoned by the fumes of the charcoal they had been burning in a close garden-house, while employed in their magic fumigations and charms, it was taken for granted, especially by the rabid opponents of Fr. Hoffmann's views (duly anathematized as atheistic) as to the character of carbonic acid gas (his discovery), that the young men had been destroyed by an evil spirit, of the kind they invoked—and evoked. Frederick Hoffmann admitted that it was a very bad spirit that had tempted them, the spirit of avarice and folly; and that a very noxious spirit (gas, or *Geist*) was the immediate cause of their death. But he contended that this latter spirit was the spirit of charcoal, and to the horror of the medical scarcely less than of the theological faculty, he acquitted the devil of all direct concern in the business. The story may be read in the notes to Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*.

Fiction must not be altogether left out in this cold collation of scraps and sundries. The admiring Parisians, in Victor Hugo's masterpiece, see absolute magic in the miraculous tricks of Esmeralda's goat—one of those learned animals which, in the Middle Ages, brought their instructors in peril of the stake. The sorceries of poor golden-hoofed Djali, however, are explained to be very innocent tricks, it being sufficient, in most cases, to hold the tambourine to the animal in such or such a way, to make it do what you wished.

Rebecca the Jewess, in *Ivanhoe*, is tried for unlawful correspondence with mystical powers, and divers weighty charges are preferred against her, supported by circumstances either altogether fictitious or trivial, and natural in themselves, but rendered pregnant with suspicion by the exaggerated manner in which they are told, and the sinister commentaries which

Elspat of overmuch intercourse with the enemy of souls,—“Silly woman,” the other answers, “thinkest thou that there is a worse fiend on earth, or beneath it, than the pride and fury of an offended woman?” (Chapter v.)

the witnesses add to the facts. She has bewitched the Templar, and the credulity of the assembly greedily swallows every allegation in proof, however incredible. But when Rebecca, at the Grand Master's command, unveils, and looks on her judges with a countenance in which bashfulness contends with dignity, her exceeding beauty excites a murmur of surprise; and the younger knights tell each other, by significant glances, silently interchanged, that Sir Brian's "best apology was in the power of her real charms, rather than of her imaginary witchcraft." As another example from Scott, take the ballad-history whence he derived the plot of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, and portions of which he quotes in the Introduction to that tragedy of doom; remarking at the same time that it was "needless to point out to the intelligent reader that the witchcraft of the mother consisted only in the ascendancy of a powerful mind over a weak and melancholy one"—that is, in his version, of Lady Ashton over Lucy.

What says Luigi Pulci, as cited by Nello in *Romola*, as to the magic ascribed to a certain trenchant blade? "Dombruno's sharp-cutting scimitar had the fame of being enchanted; but," says Luigi, "I am rather of opinion that it cut sharp because it was of strongly tempered steel." It is in the same historical novel that, discussing with Tito the pledge of Fra Domenico to face the ordeal by fire, Spini exclaims, with a grimace intended to hide a certain shyness in trenching on this speculative ground, "But suppose he *did* get magic and the devil to help him, and walk through the fire, after all? how do you know there's nothing in these things? Plenty of scholars believe in them, and this Frate is bad enough for anything." Tito answers, with a shrug, that of course there are such things, but he has particular reasons for knowing that the Frate is not on such terms with the devil as can give him any confidence in this affair. "The only magic he relies on is his own ability." We may apply to the like purpose the changed conviction of the Hebrew outcasts, pestilence-stricken pariahs, to whose service *Romola* so nobly devotes

herself: "The suspicion that Romola was a supernatural form was dissipated, but their minds were filled instead with the more effective sense that she was a human being whom God had sent over the sea to command them."

The Brown Woman in Hood's *Tylney Hall*, an accepted fortune-teller, owes her repute to a shrewd and subtle foresight as to the probable course of human affairs, the conscious result simply of her sagacity, experience, and knowledge of the world. Her dominion is but "thè power of a strong mind over weak ones;" but her reputation invests her with respect and awe in the eyes of the vulgar, "while from servants and retainers it procured private goodwill and unbounded confidence, furnishing her with a circumstantial history of the past and present in exchange for the glimmerings she chose to give of the future." And these domestic confidences may be said, as in so many other such cases, to have constituted her working capital. Trust her, and such as her, to put it out at good interest. Like *la devineuse* or *divineresse* of La Fontaine:

"Son fait consistait en adresse :
Quelques termes de l'art, beaucoup de hardiesse,
Du hasard quelquefois, tout cela concourait,
Tout cela bien souvent faisait crier miracle."

And *devineresse* takes the *pas* of *devineux*, sorceress of sorcerer, witch of wizard, by prescriptive precedence of the sex in such matters. When the lacquey in Molina's *Don Gil in the Green Pantaloons* finds at last that his master is his mistress, he begins a form of exorcism; but, being assured that she, Don Gil, *alias* Doña Juana, is only a woman, he philosophically remarks that all the mischief and mystery are accounted for:

"That word explains the whole;
Ay, and if thirty worlds were going mad,
It would be reason good for all the uproar."

Mr. Disraeli tells us, in *Tancred*, there are spells of social sorcery "more potent than all the necromancy of Merlin or Friar Bacon." The metamorphosis of Juliana in *The Honey-moon* so amazes her father that he is eager to know by what

preternatural arts and devices Duke Aranza can have wrought the change.

“What spell, what cunning witchcraft
Has he employ’d?
Ful. None: he has simply taught me
To look into myself; his powerful rhetoric
Has with strong influence impress’d my heart,
And made me see at length the thing I have been,
And what I am, sir.”

But the dramatic literature of all countries would embarrass us with riches of illustrative matter. Not to be further embarrassed, let us take but two citations from Schiller, of varied import: the one is where Queen Isabel taunts the soldiers with their dread of the Maid of Orleans:

“She a magician? Her sole magic lies
In your delusion and your cowardice.”

The other is where Kennedy and Mary Stuart are discussing the fatal influence over Mary of a man like Bothwell:

“That despotic man
Ruled you with shameful, overbearing will,
And with his philtres and his hellish arts
Inflamed your passions.
Mary. All the arts he used
Were man’s superior strength and woman’s weakness.
Ken. No, no, I say. The most pernicious spirits
Of hell he must have summon’d to his aid,
To cast this mist before your waking senses.”

Not Brabantio was more convinced of this, with regard to the Moor’s alleged practices on Desdemona, than was Kennedy in the case of the bold, bad Earl’s influence over her fascinated mistress.

§ IV.

OTHELLO'S STORY OF HIS LIFE.

Othello, Act i., Sc. 3.

BRABANTIO had loved the Moor, and oft invited him to the home of Desdemona,

“ Still question'd me the story of my life,
From year to year, the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have pass'd.
I ran it through, ev'n from my boyish days
To the very moment that he bade me tell it,”—

and crowded was that recital with details as vivid as picturesque of most disastrous chances, and moving accidents by flood and field, and hair-breadth escapes, and captivity, and redemption from captivity. But no vapouring vaunter he, after the type of Don Adriano the fantastical Spaniard, as hit off by Shakspeare's King of Navarre, who, nevertheless, has something of Brabantio's relish and faculty as, that rare thing, a good listener ;

“ The child of fancy [invention] that Armado hight . . .
How you delight, my lords, I know not, I ;
But I protest, I love to hear him lie,
And I will use him for my minstrelsy,”

or story-telling (in a double sense). Prospero is quite ready, uninvited, to relate in full the history of his strange exile and island career ; but he must have time to tell it, and the time must be of his own choosing :

“ For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
Befitting this first meeting. . . .
Sir, I invite your highness, and your train,
To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
For this one night ; which (part of it) I'll waste
With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it
Go quick away ; the story of my life,
And the particular accidents, gone by,
Since I came to this isle.”

If Caius Marcius be too modest, or too proud, to tell his

own story, Cominius is ready, and eager, to tell it for him, and with this promised result, that senators shall mingle tears with smiles; and "great patricians shall attend, and shrug, i' the end, admire;" and ladies "shall be frightened, and, gladly quaked, hear more." Given a master of the art of narrative, and it need not be the doer himself of great acts that shall spell-bind an assembly. When Herodotus recited his history at the Olympic games, it was to an audience keenly sympathetic, upon whom not a phrase, scarce a word, was lost; men who listened with delight to his tales of travel, that to them were not travellers' tales—that resembled Othello's narrative, in the matter of cannibals and giants—that told of strange beasts and birds and trees, of gods 'whose very name it was impiety to utter,' of towns like provinces and of rivers like seas, besides all the romance as well as history of their own dear land.* But there are exceptional cases; and the rule is for the actor to stir his listeners by a personal narrative, to thrill them by associating every incident and feat and trial with the *MOI qui vous parle*. Odysseus, like another ancient mariner, holds fast as rapt listeners all sorts of people—a goddess herself, at one time, Circe, who sat in silence as he obeyed her commands to tell his tale. Three days and three nights had passed since he began his story in the hearing of Eumæus,—“Unfinish'd yet; and yet I thirst to hear!” professed that worthy man; while the travelled hero declared it might easily be made endless, more easily than ended: “Not the whole circle of the year would close My long narration of a life of woes.” We think of Queen Dido and her fatal interest in that too fascinating story-teller, the Trojan wanderer, who told his story with eloquence so pathetic. We think of Queen

* *Point d'esprit critique ou moqueur*, might be said of them, as of the mediæval listeners to *jongleur* and *trouvère*, the course of whose recital all were bent on following; for follow they did in thought the imaginary conflicts and prodigious adventures described, enjoying the delicious pleasure of fighting the battles o'er again without having to endure the fatigues of them in fact; identifying themselves with the hero, and with him dealing out swashing blows, and, if they got one in return, happily ensured against its dinting their armour, or even ruffling their tunic.

Isabella and her ladies hanging with eager curiosity upon the story so well told by Columbus.* We think of the "faire Medina" in Spenser, beseeching Sir Guyon of courtesy to tell from whence he came through jeopardy :

" 'Tell on, fayre sir,' said she, 'that dolefull tale,
From which sad ruth does seeme you to restraine ;' "

and of the Redcrosse Knight in another canto, plied by his royal host and hostess with requests for a recital of his feats and toils in full : "of strange adventures and of perils sad Which in his travell him befallen had," and

"Great pleasure, mixt with pitiful regard,
That godly king and queen did passionate,
Whyles they his pitiful adventures heard."

Or, being in the sphere of fiction again, we think of the Sultan pressing Fortunatus after dinner for a detailed report of his adventures ; and of Formal egging on Brainworm (in Ben Jonson) to relate the manner of his services, and his devices in the wars : "They say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile End." Or we think of Young Norval, in *Douglas*, attracted to the hermit's cell by the hermit's stories, "for he had been a soldier in his youth, and fought in famous battles." Recurring to real life, we think of elderly Prince Charles Edward, just forty years after the Forty-five, urged by Mr. Greathed in Rome to recount the tale of that enterprise, and at first reluctant, however importunately *jussus*, *renovare* that ancient and only not quite *infandum dolorem* ; but eventually recounting it all with great animation and an even vehement energy of manner—his marches, his battles, his victories, and his defeat, his hair-breadth escapes, and the inviolable devotion of his Highland followers, remembering whom, and their sufferings, his fortitude forsook him, and he fell to the floor in a swoon. We think of Goldsmith en-

* Years later, the now aged admiral had a very different kind of listener in the cold-hearted Ferdinand, to whom, by command, he gave a particular account of his latest voyage ; but sadly Columbus missed the benign Queen, whose tears were ready, on occasion, as well as her ever-appreciative and approving smiles.

tranced by the magic-wove thread of Byrne's wanderings in foreign lands, and the world of campaigning stories of which that pædagog Paddy was mostly the hero; and in whom little Oliver, at that period at least, had as much faith and interest as though Byrne had been the veritable (if not veracious) old soldier of his Deserted Village, ever kindly welcome at the pastor's fireside; for there

"The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won."

And that again makes us think of both Goldsmith and Johnson as listeners to General Oglethorpe's graphic tale, by the bigger doctor's particular request, of the siege of Belgrade,—told in the true veteran style, as the General poured a little wine on the table, and with a wet finger drew his lines and parallels, and described the positions of the opposing force,—to all of which Johnson at least gave the most lively heed, poring over the plans and diagrams with what Washington Irving calls "his usual purblind closeness." Washington Irving himself delighted in following the recital of a real adventurer,—Belzoni, for instance, of whom he writes: "I have been as much delighted in conversing with him, and getting from him an account of his adventures and feelings, as was ever one of Sindbad's auditors." Or, say, as ever were those ancient Gauls, whose greatest pleasure next to fighting, was to crowd round the stranger at their feasts, and make him tell them tales of distant lands.

Scott describes Dame Elspeth's curch as bristling with horror, and Tibb Tacket in ecstasies of interest, as they listened to the tales of Christie the Border rider, "like Desdemona to Othello's." Such a listener, again, found Sir Piercie Shafton in Mysie, the Miller's maid. Major Bridgenorth, in *Peveril*, secured an eager auditor in Julian, for his narrative of foreign travel "contained traits of interest and of wonder, such as are usually captivating to a youthful ear." Cleveland, in the *Pirate*, fascinated the fair sisters by the spirit as well as modesty with which he told of the many

gallant actions he had wrought, and the many distant countries he had seen: "You would think you saw the flash and heard the report of the guns," said Brenda, of his sea-fight stories; but Minna was the sister more seriously attentive to his romantic records of "foreign people, and distant wars, in wild and unknown regions." In *Woodstock*, again, we have the disguised prince, a fugitive, and in instant peril of his life, essaying to interest Alice Lee by "such anecdotes, partly of warlike and perilous adventure, as possessed the same degree of interest for the female ear which they have had ever since Desdemona's days."

Herr Teufelsdröckh, in his description of Andreas Futteral and his wife, tells us of the latter, that "Gretchen was won, like Desdemona, by the deeds rather than the looks of her now veteran Othello;" and in a later chapter the Clothes-Philosopher explains how his young imagination was stirred up, and a historical tendency given him by the narrative habits of Father Andreas; who, with his battle-reminiscences, and grey austere yet patriarchal aspect, could not but appear another Ulysses and Much-enduring Man. "Eagerly I hung upon his tales, when listening neighbours enlivened the hearth; from these perils and these travels, wild and far almost as Hades itself, a dim world of Adventure expanded itself within me." Charles Nodier's intimates delighted to recall how rich and expansive he was in stories of adventure and marvel, how, "il s'épanchait en abondants et naïfs récits, et faisait revivre . . . désespoirs ardents, philtres mortels, complots, terreurs crédules, fuites errantes," and what you will, or as you like it, winter's tale, or midsummer night's dream, besides. Chateaubriand's Don Rodrigue constrained the noble Moor, Aben-Hamet, to charm his household, in which there was a Desdemona, with his *merveilleux récits de l'Orient*. In his turn we have *le Maure* a spell-bound listener to the picturesque narrations of Don Carlos: "Ces récits enchantaient Aben-Hamet, dont la passion pour les histoires merveilleuses trahissait le sang arabe." There is a dash of Desdemona in Mr. Reade's Lucy Fountain questioning the "great traveller" Talboys with a warm and courteous curiosity, and so plying

him that the other ladies present come gliding up one by one, serpent-like, with genuine curiosity and most seeming non-chalance. But her success is more legitimate in the instance of David Dodd, whom she drew out with all a woman's tact, and with a warmth that set *him* on real fire: He turned his eye, which glowed now like a live coal, towards that enticing voice, and presently, like a ship that has been hanging over the water ever so long on the last rollers, with one gallant glide he took the sea and towed them all like little cockleboats in his wake. "From sea to sea, from port to port, from tribe to tribe, from peril to peril, from feat to feat, David whirled his wonder-struck hearers, and held them panting by the quadruple magic of a tuneful voice, a changing eye, an ardent soul, and truth at first-hand." For above a dozen years, man and boy, he had beat about the globe, with real eyes, real ears, and real brains ever at work. So he peopled the soft and cushioned drawing-room with twenty different tribes and varieties of man, barbarous, semi-barbarous, and civilized; and each auditor may be presumed to have resembled the laureate's "My lady with her fingers interlock'd," when she "call'd all her vital spirits into each ear to listen"—but one among them rather than that other lady in the same picture, whose

"eager fancy hurried with him—
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life."

Or again like Balzac's Duchess in *Ferragus*, prompting Armand to "all his pilgrimage dilate" for her behoof: "Vos aventures en Orient me charment. Racontez-moi bien toute votre vie. J'aime à participer aux souffrances ressenties par un homme de courage, car je les ressens, vrai!" It were preposterous, perhaps, to compare this last listener to Wordsworth's simple-hearted, trustful Ruth, when there came a warrior from Georgia's shore, "and with him many tales he brought of pleasure and of fear; such tales as told to any maid by such a youth in the green shade, were perilous to hear." Glance we back again, then, at David Dodd enthralling his friends with his "breathing-burning histories;" for in him were met those rare allies, heart to dare and do, yet heart to feel, and brain and tongue to tell a deed well; and he therefore mastered

his hearers, and played on their breasts as David played the harp ; making the women's bosoms swell, and their eyes flash and glisten, and their cheeks flush and grow pale by turns, so that they were away in thought out of a "carpeted temple of wax, small-talk, nonentity, and nonentities, away to sea-breezes that they almost felt in their hair and round their temples as their hearts rose and fell upon a broad swell of passions, perils, waves, male men, realities."* The disguised and nominal Philip—a Philippa by rights—of the same author's *Wandering Heir*, presses James Annesley, the much-enduring heir in question, to tell the whole story of his life. It took some special pressing to succeed, but at last, "Sit by me, my one friend," said Annesley, "and I'll tell it thee ; ay, ever since I was four years old." Then he told his story, (the story tells us,) but broke down once or twice ; then went manfully on, the more so that, while he was telling it, a brown but shapely hand stole into his, and was seldom idle, but ever speaking as variously as a voice, with its gentle pressure of sympathy, and sudden grasps at danger : but when he came to his being kidnapped and swooning dead away in the ship, it trembled, and Philip "turned away his head, and never looked towards him again, and by then he was flung into gaol and cast for death, the narrator discovered that Philip was crying." And all of a sudden, Philip's tears drew forth his own once more, the first he had shed for years ; and they did him a world of good. "Oh, my dear Philip !" he cried, "you have saved me from despair ; a cloud clears from my mind. Whilst I have one friend who will shed a tear for me, it were ungrateful to despair." We might swell the list of examples with that of the young Indian hero, Captain Gordon, giving a serio-comic version of his adventures, warding off all praise of great and gallant

* Lucy's eyes are the alleged source of David's narrative enthusiasm : "I feel them shine on me like a couple of suns," he declares : "They would make a statue pay the yarn out." In an earlier book of Mr. Reade's, an autobiographic adventurer is made to say of another enthralled listener, "Her eyes glittered like two purple stars at a stranger with the gift of the gab, that had seen so much of life as I had."

deeds by the playful tone which made peril seem a joke, and desperate valour the most commonplace quality of man ;— or Sir Jasper's tenant, after fifteen years of wandering in the wildest and loneliest regions of the earth, thrilled with novel pleasure at the sight of such a listener as he had now secured ; or Captain Arundel, fresh from his Indian campaign, answering Mary Marchmont's hundred questions about midnight marches and solitary encampments, fainting camels, lurking tigers in the darkness of the jungle, intercepted supplies of provisions, stolen ammunition, and all the other details of the war. Horace Graham, back from his wanderings in South America, relates his travels and adventures to his Aunt Barbara and Cousin Madelon, and finds in Mrs. Treherne a perfect listener, sufficiently well-informed to make it worth while to tell her more, and knowing how to put intelligent questions just at the right moment. As for Madelon, she had been busily engaged on some piece of embroidery when he first began talking, but gradually her hands have dropped into her lap, and, with her eyes fixed on him in the frankest unconsciousness, she has become utterly absorbed in what he is saying. "Graham's whole heart was in his work, past and present ; and this rapt naïve interest on the part of the girl at once flattered and encouraged him," especially as contrasted with the sleepy circle of apathetic listeners he has lately had to do with elsewhere. If we take yet one other example from the wide, wide world of prose fiction, let it be the ironically told instance of Thackeray's Bachelor of Beak Street, with Elizabeth Prior for sympathetic listener. "I told her my story. . . . She seemed to compassionate me. . . . She used to come to me, and she used to pity me, and I used to tell her all, and to tell her over and over again." Sometimes the house affairs would, as in Desdemona's case, but of another kind,* and at Mrs. Prior's shrill

* Desdemona's house affairs, contends Mr. Grant White, were not affairs of pots and pans, as those appear to assume who object to Hildebrandt's presentment of her as too "magnificent." In those days, all ladies under queenly rank overlooked their households ; and Desdemona was the mistress of her father's house, her mother being dead ; and in

summons, call her thence ; and, unlike Desdemona, she could not so “with haste despatch” them as to return the same day ; but the next day the good girl was sure to come again, and then there would be another repetition of Mr. Batchelor’s recital.

If in one Idyll of the King we have womanly interest in tales of prowess told at second-hand,—Earl Yniol speaks, and to Geraint of Devon,—

“For this dear child hath often heard me praise
Your feats of arms, and often when I paused
Hath asked again, and ever loved to hear ;
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts,”—

in another we have manly eagerness, in kind and in degree no whit inferior, where Lavaire importunes Lancelot,

“ ‘O tell us ; for we live apart ; you know
Of Arthur’s glorious wars.’ And Lancelot spoke
And answer’d him at full, as having been
With Arthur ”

in the fierce fight by the Glern, and in the four wild battles by the shore of Duglas, and that on Bassa, and the war near Calidon the forest and wherever else ; all told as became King Arthur and his knights.

§ V.

OTHELLO’S SOLDIERLY SIMPLICITY OF SPEECH.

Othello, Act i., Sc. 3.

RUDE in his speech, Othello claimed to be, and to have the right to be, in his address to the Senate ; for from his seventh year to the present one his life had been in the tented field

superintending the establishment of a man of his degree, she would find quite enough to occupy her, on the showing of Shakspeare’s Scholar, without being called upon to soil the tips of her fingers, or hold up the train of her robe.

and its surroundings ; and therefore little should he grace his cause in speaking for himself, he being no speaker, at least no orator, but a plain soldier only, conversant mainly with feats of broil and battle ; yet, being put upon his defence, he would, by the gracious patience of these most potent, grave, and reverend signors, his very noble and approved good masters, deliver a "round unvarnished tale" of his relations with Brabantio's household. Let the senators, for they could afford to do so, dispense with rhetoric on his part, and hear him in his natural style, simple, and straightforward, and truthful. A rude speaker, and a round unvarnished tale ; but a speaker that could speak home to them, and a tale that must tell.

Shakspeare's Antony stops short the plain speaking of bluff Enobarbus with the curt enjoinder, "Thou art a soldier only ; speak no more." Later in the play this rough soldier is more courteously addressed by Pompey, "Enjoy thy plainness, It nothing ill becomes thee." Pompey's cue is to conciliate, but Antony knows his man. In the other great Roman tragedy in which Antony plays a leading part, he craftily disclaims before the Roman populace all pretence to oratorical arts :

" I am no orator, as Brutus is ;
But as you know me all, a plain blunt man
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech
To stir men's blood : I only speak right on."

Hotspur declares for himself, in the military council, that he has not well the gift of tongue, and when interrupted by the arrival of a messenger announcing the near approach of the King, is avowedly glad of that excuse for cutting short his speech. Coriolanus, like the Moor of Venice, has been bred in the wars since he could draw a sword, and is "ill school'd in boulded [sifted] language ; meal and bran together He throws without distinction." He is urged to conciliate the people by telling them he is their soldier, and, being bred in broils, has not the soft way that might better please them And honest old Menenius pleads with them on his behalf,

“ Consider further,
That when he speaks not like a citizen,
You find him like a soldier : do not take
His rougher accents for malicious sounds,
But, as I say, such as become a soldier.”

Troilus, again, avows it to be his vice, his fault, to be simply outspoken and truthful, at all costs ; and he is content to be without those plausible arts of speech, wherein “ the Grecians are most prompt and pregnant.” Ovid’s Ajax, with a not unlike sally of odious comparison, contrasts himself in this respect with Ulysses, when pleading against that consummate rhetorician for the arms of Achilles : *Nec mihi dicere promptum, Nec facere est isti*. So again is the man of action, chary of self-assertion in talk, thus characterized in Tacitus : *Plurimum facere, et minimum ipso de se loqui*. In the sixth satire of Horace there is a passage bits of which might be made to apply to Othello before the Senate, or at least to the Moor’s too modest disclaimer of anything like eloquence :

“ Ut veni coram, singultim pauca locutus,
Infans namque pudor prohibebat plura profari . . .
Sed quod eram, narro.”

Of Cimon we are told, that, like Themistocles, he was little skilled in the graceful accomplishments of his countrymen, while devoid of that great man’s smooth and artful affability ; in lieu of which, however, Cimon conjoined to a certain roughness of manner that hearty and ingenuous frankness which ever conciliates mankind, especially in free states, and which is yet more popular when, as in his case, united to rank. A contrast to him, in very many respects, we have in the Emperor Maximian, the rusticity of whose appearance and delivery betrayed in the most elevated fortune the meanness of his extraction : “ War,” says Gibbon, “ was the only art which he professed ”—and Mamertinus expresses a doubt whether his hero, this Sirmian peasant, in imitating the conduct of Hannibal and Scipio, had ever heard of their names. The arts of persuasion, so diligently cultivated by the first Cæsars, were neglected, says their historian, “ by the military ignorance and Asiatic pride of their successors ; and if they con-

descended to harangue the soldiers, whom they feared, they treated with silent disdain the senators, whom they despised." The remark is made with reference to the exceptional instance of Julian, who set up for orator, not without making good his pretensions. Another exception may be cited in the instance of Valentinian, whose military life had indeed diverted his youth from pursuits of literature, and who was ignorant of Greek, and of the arts of rhetoric; but as the mind of the orator was never disconcerted by timid perplexity, he was able, as often as the occasion prompted him, to deliver his decided sentiments with bold and ready elocution. Nor be forgotten Gibbon's description of Ali, who was eloquent speaker as well as valiant soldier: "And every antagonist, in the combats of the tongue or of the sword, was subdued by his eloquence and valour." Like Beaumont and Fletcher's Alberto,

"a blunt soldier
May borrow so much from the oil'd-tongued courtier,"

as will serve his turn, if the loan can be well placed, and profitably employed. But only your born orator is likely to acquit himself well, when it comes to oratory; and the better policy in the main is Almada's:

"'Tis not my gift to play the orator,
But in plain words to lay our state before you."

When Du Molay was called on to defend the Order of his imperilled brotherhood, the Templars, he professed himself an unlearned man, incompetent for such a task, at any rate without counsel to aid him, but he would do, and did, his best. Gerald de Caus had just two days before him made a like reply, deprecatory and remonstrant: he was a simple soldier, he told the Court, without house, arms, or land: he had neither ability nor knowledge to defend the Order. Shan O'Neil was urgent with Queen Bess that Her Majesty should make every allowance for his inbred rudeness and incivility.*

* Like the Highland hero of John Home's tragedy, when he tells Lady Randolph (very much as the Moor tells the Senate):

"To go to our gracious Sovereign, before whom all words must be lackered over either with gilding or with sugar, is such a confectionery matter as clean baffles my poor old English brain," quoth honest Blount, in *Kenilworth*. Cœur de Lion in the *Talisman* makes this his style of apology to the assembled princes: "Richard is a soldier—his hand is ever readier than his tongue—and his tongue is but too much used to the rough language of his trade." So again the noble Constable De Lacy, in Scott's other Tale of the Crusaders: "I have been too long trained in camps and councils to express my meaning otherwise than simply and plainly." And that blunt soldier Le Balafre, in *Quentin Durward*, though he could make a shift to express himself intelligibly enough to King Lewis, to whose familiarity he was habituated, breaks down altogether in his attempt to address an assembly,—a veritable man of war, not words.

In the Imaginary Conversation—not one of Walter Savage Landor's many, but Lord Macaulay's single one—between Milton and Cowley, the greater poet reproaches the lesser for assuming Cromwell to have been of a mean capacity because he was an ungraceful orator, and never said, either in public or private, anything memorable. "Sure this is unjust," says Milton; and he goes on to show how many men there have been ignorant of letters, without wit, without eloquence, who yet had the wisdom to devise, and the courage to perform, that which they lacked language to explain. "Such men often, in troubled times, have worked out the deliverance of nations and their own greatness, not by logic, not by rhetoric," but by wariness in success, by calmness in danger, by fierce and stubborn resolution in all adversity. When a popular Prime Minister of a past generation sat down again after addressing the House, their general impres-

" Rude I am
In speech and manner; never till this hour
Stood I in such a presence."

But Shan O'Neil could not have gone on saying with Norval to Glenalvon,

" Sir, I have been accusom'd all my days
To hear and speak the plain and simple truth."

sion is said to have been that it was a thousand pities a man with so good a case, and so good a head for business, should not have the art of stating it better; but they felt that they must not allow themselves to be biassed by his mere defects in art, or to be misled by his opponent's brilliant display; and they would go away priding themselves on their power of distinguishing solid truth from wordy show, and perhaps too on having proved themselves sympathetically anxious to help the struggle of the honest advocate of a sound cause against the disadvantages of his own oratorical defects. Addison's Goodman Fact is allowed by everybody to be a plainspoken person, and a man of very few words; tropes and figures are his aversion; he affirms everything roundly, without any art, rhetoric, or circumlocution; yet so great is his natural eloquence, that he cuts down the finest orator, and destroys the best-contrived argument, as soon as ever he gets himself to be heard. "I promise you that plain truth, clothed in plain language," says the parliamentary baronet in *Self*, "brings conviction to my mind, far before the finest oration, studded with classical quotations, and coloured with historical allusions." Never lost upon such ears are such words, fit though fewer, and perhaps the fewer the fitter, as come from one of Miles Standish's make,

"a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but of actions . . .

Truly a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases,"—

one who, having a message to deliver,

"Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful phrases,

But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a schoolboy."

§ VI.

*LIFE ONLY IN ANOTHER LIFE.**

Othello, Act iv., Sc. 2.

BUT that it is immeasurable, the agony of Othello at the loss of Desdemona—for in believing her false he has lost her—may best be measured by the passionate intensity of the line,

“Where either I must live, or bear no life.”

Had it pleased Heaven to try him with affliction in any other respect,—to have rained all kinds of sores and shames on his bare head,—to have steeped him in poverty to the very lips, or given to captivity himself and his utmost hopes, he could, he would have found in some part of his soul a drop of patience. Nay, he could even have borne the being pointed at and talked about and despised as a betrayed husband. The mere thought of this last degradation made him wince and writhe,—

“Yet could I bear that too ; well, very well :
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart ;
Where either I must live, or bear no life ;
The fountain from the which my current flows,
Or else dries up,”—

to lose this treasure was to lose all ; he lived only in that other life. He lived only for another, and that other had failed him. Live for himself he could not, would not. In Desdemona's life and love he must live, or not live at all. And she had willed it, he believed, in his desolating despair, that life for him should henceforth be no more. Not only was Othello's occupation gone, but his very life, all that made him and kept him a living soul.†

* The same fundamental thought has been made the ground-plot of (prave 'orts ! might Fluellen or Parson Hugh mutter) a similar super-structure of illustrations, in a previous volume, *Traits of Character in Bible Story*, pp. 44—56. “A Life bound up in a Life” is the title of the chapter in question.

It is with him as with the miserable father in Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse* :

“ Non, je t'aime,
Voilà tout. N'es-tu pas ma vie et mon sang même ?
Si je ne t'avais point, qu'est-ce que je ferais,
Mon Dieu ! ”

Or as the apprehensive lover in Terence words it, *Quod si fit, pereō funditus*. Or we may take other words of Shakspeare's own, in the Sonnets :

“ And life no longer than thy love will stay,
For it depends upon that love of thine.”

And he would further offer us the melancholy musings, somewhat fantastical or “conceited” withal, of the only real Gentleman of the Two of Verona :

“ To die, is to be banish'd from myself ;
And Silvia is myself : banish'd from her,
Is self from self ; a deadly banishment !
What light is light, if Silvia be not seen ? . . .
She is my essence, and I leave [cease] to be,
If I be not by her fair influence
Foster'd, illumined, cherish'd, kept alive.”

Florizel is none the less hearty for being less artificial in his protestations to Perdita,

“ I cannot be
Mine own, or anything to any, if
I be not thine.”

At the mere thought of being separated from Anzoletto, Consuelo cries, “How shall I be able to love anything when the half of my existence is taken away ?” She felt, born artist though she was, that even art could not be a thing to live for, if the other love were gone. Like the lover in *Lucile*, but reversing the position of the sexes,

“ His whole being seem'd to cling to her, as though
He divined that, in some unaccountable way,
His happier destinies secretly lay
In the light of her dark eyes. And still, in his mind,
To the anguish of losing the woman was join'd
The terror of missing his life's destination,
Of which, as in mystical representation,
The love of the woman, whose aspect benign
Guided, starlike, his soul, seem'd the symbol and sign.

For he felt, if the light of that star it should miss,
That there lurk'd in his nature, conceal'd, an abyss
Into which all the current of being might roll,
Devastating a life, and submerging a soul."

When a tender affection, remarks George Eliot, has been storing itself in us through many of our years, the idea that we could accept any exchange for it seems to be a cheapening of our lives.*

Even the self-absorbed Septimius of romance felt how sweet it might be to have one unchangeable companion; for, unless he strung the pearls and diamonds of life upon one unbroken affection, he sometimes thought that his life would have nothing to give it unity and identity; and so the longest life would be but an aggregate of insulated fragments, without relation to one another. And so it would be not one life, but many unconnected ones. Unless he could look into the same eyes, through the mornings of future time, opening and blessing him with the fresh gleam of love and joy; unless the same sweet voice could melt his thoughts together; unless some sympathy of a life side by side with his could knit them into one; looking back upon the same things; looking forward to the same; the long, thin thread of an individual life, stretching onward and onward, would cease to be visible, cease to be felt, cease, by-and-by, to have any real bigness in proportion to its length—(length of life, be it remembered, preternatural length, was Septimius's craze)—and so be virtually non-existent, except in the "mere inconsiderable Now."

Eugénie de Guérin said quaintly and picturesquely, "Maurice and I were bound together in our inmost souls as if by ribands of rose-colour;" and when she had lost him, "Ah," she said, "my life will be a long mourning, with a widowed heart, and without any tie of intimate union." Crabbe's Jane had risked her happiness on a less worthy object,—

"On him she had reposed each worldly view,
And when he fail'd, the world itself withdrew,

* "And we can set a watch over our affections and our constancy as we can over other treasures."—*Middlemarch*, chap. lvii.

With all its prospects. Nothing could restore
To life its value ; hope would live no more."

Constantine Palæologus in the tragedy is upbraidingly asked by Valeria if he has for her in fancy shaped a world and an existence where he is not? and falling on his neck, she exclaims, or declaims,

" Here is my world, my life, my land of refuge,
And to no other will I ever flee.
Here still is light and hope ; turning from this,
All else is round me as a yawning tomb."

In a better known drama, Clifford's heart finds itself bankrupt, there, where most it coveted to be rich, and thought it was so.

" O Julia, I have ventured for thy love,
Like the bold merchant, who, for only hope
Of some rich gain, all former gains will risk.
Before I ask'd a portion of thy heart,
I perill'd all my own ; and now, all's lost."

Should Van Artevelde's cherished hope be blighted, should its blossom be coldly nipped, then were he desolate indeed ! a man whom heaven would wean from earth, with nothing left him on earth but care and quarrels, troubles and distraction, the heavy burthens and the broils of life.

" And still to each, some poor, obscurest life
Breathes all the bliss, or kindles all the strife.
Wake up the countless dead !—ask every ghost
Whose influence tortured or consoled the most :
How each pale spectre of the host would turn
From the fresh laurel and the glorious urn,
To point, where rots beneath a nameless stone,
Some heart in which had ebb'd and flow'd his own."

Je respire où tu palpites, is the strain of France's, foremost living poet : " à quoi bon, hélas ! rester là si tu me quittes, et vivre si tu t'en vas ? " And again : " Il suffit que tu t'en ailles Pour qu'il ne reste plus rien.

" Tu m'entoures d'auréoles ; te voir est mon seul souci.
Il suffit que tu t'envoles pour que je m'envole aussi . . .
De quoi puis-je avoir envie, de quoi puis-je avoir effroi,
Que ferai-je de la vie, si tu n'es plus près de moi ? "

One of Lord Lytton's Two Travellers is pictured

“struggling forward, maim'd
In every feeling, saved, not all, indeed,
But all mere life hath left when love is dead,
And dead, with love, life's sense of lovely things.”

For there had been a crisis in his career when, with tears, he had torn

“His tortured spirit from love's control,
But thus left for ever behind him, lost,
The finest and fairest parts of his soul,
Saving the rest of himself at their cost.”

Almost as applicable to the Moor of Venice as to the very different hero of whom it was written, is a fine critic's remark that through all the storm of his anger, sarcasm, contempt, denunciation, there sounds a note of unutterable tenderness which gives to the whole movement a prevailing character of pain and anguish, of moral desolation, rather than of wrath and vengeance: not only is his love uprooted,—his hope, his faith in the world have perished in that lightning flash. Or, in the Moor's instance, if his love be not uprooted, it is because he is still alive; and living on, yet a little span, he must love on, till that little be all gone.

The more intensely Othello felt that in Desdemona's love and life he must live, and move, and have his being, or else have no life at all, the more bitterly he accused himself, when it was too late, for the blinded, besotted fatuity with which, believing her false, he had with his own hands choked out the life that alone he could live in. Be the reference what it may, to Indian or Judæan, or any other varied reading of a disputed text, at least his meaning stands forth clear in the main when he speaks of himself, and asks to be spoken of, as

“one, whose hand,
Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe.”

Coleridge fairly lost patience with Warburton's suggested emendation of Judæan, as referring to Herod and Mariamne—this it was, he cried, for no-poets to comment on the greatest of poets. “O, how many beauties, in this one line, were

impenetrable to the ever thought-swarming but idealess Warburton!" Othello wishes to excuse himself on the score of ignorance, and yet not to excuse himself,—to excuse himself by accusing. This struggle of feeling, Coleridge takes to be finely conveyed in the word "base," which is applied to the rude Indian, not in his own character, but as the momentary representative of Othello's; Indian meaning American, a savage *in genere*. Mr. Dyce quotes from Drayton's *Legend of Matilda*, "The wretched Indian spurns the golden Ore;" and another commentator cites a passage from Habington, in which "the unskilfull Indian" scatters bright gems among the waves,—and one from Howard, in which "Indians . . . cast away" a pearl. Nevertheless, the preponderance, both of arguments and disputants, is alleged to be largely in favour of Judæan, or "Iudean," which is the folio reading, as Indian is the quarto. Mr. Grant White is entirely satisfied that the folio is right, and that Othello is meant to allude to the murder of Mariamne by Herod, the story of which was well known to the public of that day, and was made the subject of a tragedy (published in 1613) by Lady Elizabeth Carew. Mr. Lunt lays stress on the use of the word "tribe" in Shakspeare, as one peculiarly appropriate to the Jewish people, (and very familiar in Shylock's mouth,) and so too the epithet "base," which, at that time of day, as well as long before and long after, would be popularly held to fit any Jew or all Jews. "Then, as to any special story of an individual Indian throwing 'a pearl away,' and of such a feat being popularly known, or known at all—where is it?" The same critic suggests that "Judean" in reality means something more than Jew: a Judean is, in fact, an inhabitant of Judea; and thus, in correspondence with Shakspeare's common mode of expression, the word might naturally, and with more force would refer to Herod, King of Judea, as "the Judean," *par excellence*,—as representing the state. Backing this view of the case, Shakspeare's Scholar insists that the phraseology absolutely requires an allusion to a particular story: the Moor likens himself not to the Indian who "throws" a pearl away, but to "the base Judean" who

"threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe"—the reference being to some particular story, specific and unmistakable. Now the American Indians, who alone had tribes, had no pearls ;* but the story of Herod had marked affinities with Othello's position,—the base Judean Herod, who says of Mariamne, in the old play,

"I had but one inestimable jewel—
Yet I in suddaine choler cast it downe
And dasht it all to pieces."

In fine, there is a good deal to be said on both sides ; but let any more of it remain unsaid. We revert from the phrase to the sentiment involved or suggested.

Praising what is lost, makes the remembrance dear, the King of France says, when Lafeu describes how reckless, blinded Bertram, in his treatment of Helen, did to himself the greatest wrong of all ; for

- "he lost a wife

Whose beauty did astonish the survey
Of richest eyes ; whose words all ears took captive ;
Whose dear perfection, hearts that scorn'd to serve,
Humbly called mistress."

But oh, the pity of it, *que de méconnaître et de perdre le bien inestimable d'être uniquement aimé*. "Fool! to fling away," with Mrs. Gore's Duke of Lisborough, "the possession of a jewel he so little deserved, and which will never be vouchsafed him from any other quarter." In another of her multitudinous fictions we have an embittered husband the more embittered against his wife because he has come to perceive, too late, the superiority of the "gentle, unassuming Blanche he had madly thrown over for her sake—the pearl, who was proving herself a pearl of price." Reversing the position of the sexes, we have one of Colonel Whyte Melville's heroines

* Commenting on a couplet of Sheffield's,

"Thus precious jewels among Indians grow,
Who not their use nor wondrous value know,"

Hartley Coleridge regards it as a parallel passage to the disputed one in *Othello*, and, like his father, scouts the notion of a reference in the latter to Herod and Mariamne as utterly absurd.

disquieting herself, not in vain, with the highly plausible apprehension, "What if he should cast *me* off now? What if I should find that I had all my life been neglecting the gem which I was too ignorant to appreciate; and now, when I knew its real value, and would give my life for it, it was beyond my grasp?" Neglecting the gem:—and Seneca tells us that *turpissima est jactura quæ fit per negligentiam*. But whatever the baseness, the agony is likely to be less than where hotter blood is concerned. Pride may be the fault, on the part of some too dear Lady Disdain:

"A life's libation lifted up, from her proud life she dash'd untasted:
There trampled lay love's costly cup, and in the dust the wine was
wasted.

She knew I could not pour such wine again at any other shrine."

Clarendon, in the *Wedding Gown*, ruefully confesses, "I knew not then your worth. I was as a poor man's child, who in his play-hours finds a priceless diamond; who, careless, loses it, and only learns from after-knowledge that the loss has beggared him." The Lothario of Cervantes bids Anselmo beware how he tampers with such a superlatively rare diamond as he possesses in Camilla—lest, losing her, he lose all, and pass for an egregious fool. The unappreciative father of Florence Dombey is at length awakened to the consciousness that he had a happy home within his reach, has had a household spirit bending at his feet, but has overlooked it in his stiffnecked sullen arrogance, and wandered away and lost himself. The piteous plaint of Raby, in the tragedy of *Percy*, is,

"I had but one little casket, where I lodged
My precious hoard of wealth, and, like an idiot,
I gave my treasure to another's keeping,
Who threw away the gem, nor knew its value,
But left the plunder'd owner quite a beggar."

Compare the remorseful lament of Leicester in Schiller:

"Do I live still? Can I still bear to live? . . .
Oh, what a pearl have I not cast away!
What bliss celestial madly dash'd aside!
She's gone, a spirit purged from mortal stain,
And the despair of hell remains for me!"

§ VII.

PUTTING OUT THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

Othello, Act v., Sc. 2.

THERE is a light burning in Desdemona's chamber when the Moor enters, on murderous thoughts intent. As easy to put out the light of Desdemona's life, as that of the poor flame that flickers while she is sleeping. Easy enough, too, he bethinks him, to rekindle that bedroom light, as soon as needed or wished for again. But how with that other light, the light of a human life? The putting out of this were but as the putting out of that; done in an instant. But the re-lighting?

"Put out the light, and then put out the light;
If I quench thee, thou flaming minister,
I can again thy former light restore,
If I repent me;—but once put out thine,
Thou cunning'st pattern of excelling nature,
I know not where is that Promethean heat
That can thy light relume."

Shakspeare's Moor has more compunctious visitings than Shakspeare's Cardinal, who, making use of a like figure of speech, and for a like purpose, but in a most unlike spirit, exclaims—meaning deadly mischief to Anne Bullen,—

"This candle burns not clear: 'tis I must snuff it;
Then out it goes."

Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster, speaks of his "oil-dried lamp, and time-bewasted light," his "inch of taper" nearly burnt and done; and he tells the king, his nephew,

"Shorten my days thou canst . . .
But, dead, thy kingdom cannot buy my breath."

The harlequin says to his lamp, in a French parody of *Otello*: "*Si j'éteins ta flamme, j'ai mon briquet, mais on n'allume pas une femme comme une guinguette.*" Hood

tells us of his golden-legged Miss Kilmansegg, on the penultimate page of her strange eventful history, that

“when she quench’d the taper’s light,
Little she thought, as the smoke took flight,
That her day was done—and merged in a night
Of dreams and duration uncertain—
Or, along with her own,
That a Hand of Bone
Was closing mortality’s curtain.”

Shelley’s Giacomo apostrophizes his unreplenished lamp, whose narrow fire is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge devouring darkness hovers :

“Thou small flame,
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
Did I not feed thee, would’st thou fail and be
As thou hadst never been ! So wastes and sinks
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine :
But that no power can fill with vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh.”

Othello must have been fresh in Shelley’s remembrance when, later in the scene, the prelate Orsino exclaims, “See, the lamp is out,” and, after some moralizing on Giacomo’s part, asks to have it relighted :

“But light the lamp ; let us not talk in the dark.
Giacomo (lighting the lamp).
And yet, once quench’d, I cannot thus relume
My father’s life.”

Quum semel occideris . . . non te restituet—but *pietas* is out of the question in the Cenci case, and *genus* too. The Caxtonian John Burley is mystical as well as moribund when he looks wistfully at the still flame of his candle, and says, “It lives ever in the air,”—meaning light. “Extinguish the light ? You cannot : fool, it vanishes from your eye, but it is still in the space.” He allows, however, that the breath of a babe can put out that light, in one sense, the common sense. And in that sense, what shall restore it ? We read in the *Palin-genesis* of a transatlantic bard, of the old belief

“that in the embers
Of all things their primordial form exists,

And cunning alchemists
 Could re-create the rose with all its members
 From its own ashes,"

though without the bloom, without the lost perfume. But ah! what wonder-working occult science can restore this little life, once rounded in a last long sleep? As the Duke muses, in Shirley's old play of *The Traitor*, with Amidea fainting before him,—

"The phoenix, with her wings, when she is dying,
 Can fan her ashes into another life;
 But when the breath, more sweet than all the spice
 That helps the other's funeral, returns
 To heaven, the world must be eternal loser."

The loss is, at least, irreparable, be it great or small. Tears choked the utterance of Lewis the Sixteenth's counsel for the defence, when they, Malesherbes, De Sèze, and Tronchet, were called in to hear his doom, and urged the revocation of a decree passed by so slender a majority. "The laws may be repealed; but who shall recall a human life?" "Father of mercies!" exclaimed Coleridge, in one of his political essays, "if we pluck a wing from the back of a fly, not all the ministers and monarchs can restore it"—how much less (if there were degrees in the impossible) one little life! Philip of Spain, in Schiller's *Don Carlos*, bewails the lost counsellor no power can restore:

"O that he might
 But live again! I'd give my Indies for it.
 Omnipotence! thou bring'st no comfort to me:
 Thou canst not stretch thine arms into the grave,
 To rectify one little act, committed
 With hasty rashness, 'gainst the life of man.
 The dead return no more."

Trust Charon for *that*. As Horace in London words it,—

"To bear poor souls to Pluto's tribe,
 One doit is Charon's modest gain.
 Ten thousand pounds will never bribe
 The rogue to row us back again!"

§ VIII.

A LOVING LIE ON DYING LIPS.

Othello, Act v., Sc. 2.

IN coupling together, as if possibly cohesive or compatible, the almost internecine words magnanimous and untruth, is there not a seeming paradox? (Yet to speak of seeming and paradox together is perhaps tautological :

“Seems, madam? nay it is; I know not seems.”)

Can magnanimity be in any case predicated of a thing essentially so base as a lie? Can there ever be a tinge of redeeming dignity about an untruth? May one in any conceivable instance impute something of nobility to a teller of untruths,—or rather to a teller of some one untruth, just once in the way? Can there be such a thing as a magnanimous liar,—that is, not a systematic and habitual liar, but a forger and utterer of a falsehood on this occasion only?

Before too peremptorily rejecting the possibility, glance at the death-bed of murdered Desdemona. Her husband has strangled her, “O falsely, falsely murdered!” A guiltless death she dies. But her last words are framed to acquit the murderer. She leaves the world with a lie in her mouth: a generous one, a magnanimous one, if magnanimous a lie can be. To Emilia, bursting in affrighted and dismayed, and piteously demanding, “O, who hath done this deed?” comes from her expiring mistress the positive negation, call it sublime, call it (as the French would) adorable, or what else you will,—

“*Nobody*; I MYSELF; farewell :

Commend me to my kind lord; O, farewell.

Oth. Why, how should she be murdered?

Emil. Alas, who knows?

Oth. You heard her say herself, it was not I.

Emil. She said so; I must needs report the truth.

Oth. She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell;

'Twas I that killed her.”

In the matter of the missing handkerchief, Desdemona

had faltered from the truth before the terrible eye of her husband ; but here, in Professor Dowden's phrase, "she utters her dying and redeeming falsehood." If she had deceived Brabantio, as in his anger he declares, and if in this matter of the handkerchief she had swerved from the truth, she now "atones for these untruths ;" not by acquisition of a confident candour,—such courageous dealing with difficulties is allowed to have been impossible for Desdemona,—but by one more falsehood, the "sacred lie which is murmured by her lips as they grow for ever silent."

The impassioned poetry, the dramatic intensity of Shakspeare, have had, again and again, their parallel passages in the homeliest prose of our police-court chronicles, when dying wives have with their last breath essayed to deliver from doom, and absolve from blame, the brute husbands by whom they have been done to death,—unconsciously emulating the magnanimity of self-accusing Desdemona's generous lie.

Splendide mendax. Womanhood has asserted its pre-eminence in this capacity, at sundry times and in divers manners. A living poet tells us that

"Men's truths are often lies, and women's lies
Often the setting of a truth most tender
In an unconscious poetry."

The tenderness is commonly undeniable, whatever we may think of the truth. Fiction is founded upon fact when it offers us a Frances Dagobert fibbing to her son by the week-together, in pretending to have drunk part of the wine they both require, but of all of which she leaves for him ; or Beatrice Morger's mother, keeping only a little, little piece of bread for herself, and saying that she had dined in the fields,—“God pardon her for the lie ! and bless her, as I am sure He did ; for, but for Him, no working man or woman could subsist upon such a wretched morsel as my dear mother took.” “Heaven have mercy on me !” exclaims quite a different sort of transgressor of the absolute law of truth : “do lies told in charity, to save

another from misery, count like wicked, selfish, profit-seeking deceptions?" If they do, this white liar confesses, or professes, to be deep in the angels' books.

Mr. Thackeray's Caroline, to save Philip Firmin from ruin, chose to forget her marriage to his father. The poor Little Sister protested to the astounded lawyer that, if the truth must be told, she—she knew it was no marriage—"never thought it was a marriage—not for good, you know." "And I'm ready to go before the Lord Chancellor to-morrow and say so."

Mr. Trollope's Kate Vavasor, being pushed violently by her brutal brother George, and falling to the ground, where he leaves her, has her arm broken. Her first thought is, how shall she mention the accident to him when they meet anon? "Should she lie, and say that she had fallen as she came down the hill alone? Of course he would not believe her, but still some such excuse as that might make the matter easier for them all." A chapter later we come upon this suggestive bit of colloquy between her father and the doctor: "Is it not odd that such an accident should come from a fall whilst walking?" asked Mr. Vavasor. The doctor shrugged his shoulders: "One can never say how anything may occur," said he. "I know a young woman who broke the os femoris by just kicking her cat;—at least she said she did." "Indeed! I suppose you didn't take any trouble to inquire?" "Not much. My business was with the injury, not with the way she got it. Somebody did make the inquiry, but she stuck to her story, and nothing came of it."

Tasso's Sophronia magnanimously plays the liar to save a doomed people. *She* took the image, she tells the enraged prince; hers the fault, be it hers to pay the penalty:

"This spotless lamb thus offered up her blood

To save the rest of Christ's selected fold;

O noble lie! was ever truth so good?

Blest be the lips that such a leasing told!"

Tasso would have pleaded something more than poetical licence thus to speak,—in the teeth of the French philoso-

pher's dictum (himself grievously given to lying, *not* of the magnanimous sort) that *le mensonge est toujours iniquité*, by way of answer absolute to the tentative query, "Si je ne fais aucun tort à un autre en le trompant, s'ensuit-il que je ne m'en fasse point à moi-même, et suffit-il de n'être jamais injuste pour être toujours innocent?" Tasso's sympathies would be with the *magnanima menzogna* of Rose de Beaurepaire, in *White Lies*, when, to screen her sister Josephine, she answers the roar in one raging breath of Edouard and Raynal, "Whose is the child?" with the words—not words, in effect, but electric shocks, "It is mine." And Rose, when she afterwards sees her sister's terror of discovery, is almost glad at the suicidal falsehood she has told. "Oh, these women!" exclaims one of them; "what will they not do, what will they not think of, when the happiness of the man they love is at stake!" Beryl, for instance, refusing to acknowledge herself married to George Geith.* Margaret Wilmot denying to Clement Austin that her heart is his,—à lie due to the machinations, and recorded in the strange history, of the so-called Henry Dunbar. Tolla, on her death-bed, broken-hearted Tolla, dictating these words in a last letter to Lello: "I ought to have known that one cannot with impunity play thus with health. Do not look out for any other causes of my death: it is the punishment of my imprudence. . . . I tell thee this to prove to thee that thou hast no cause to reproach thyself."† The dying hos-

* "Did Beryl weep? it was for him. . . . Did she lie, did the heart which was truth itself frame falsehoods, did the trembling lips utter deceit? it was for him—all, all for him."—*George Geith of Fen Court*, ch. xlv.

† Menico, in the same tale of modern Rome, lies worthily of Tolla herself. Witness the scene where the Count and the doctor interrogate the wounded man. "If I only knew," cries Amarella, "the wretch who fired at thee!" "No one fired at me. I fell upon a sharp stone." "But how could you have fallen upon both temples at once?" "That is not more difficult than to sleep on both ears." "But, unhappy man, you had a ball inside you." "Had I a ball inside me? . . . I must have drunk after some dirty person or other."—*Tolla*, ch. v.

Souls masculine can emulate the magnanimity of souls feminine in this

pital patient, in Mr. Dickens' sketch, is warned not to persist in what she knows to be untrue, for it cannot save the brute whose hand has brought her low. "Jack," she murmurs in reply, laying her hand upon his arm, "they shall not persuade me to swear your life away. He didn't do it, gentlemen; he didn't hurt me." In *The Haunted Man*, again, Redlaw questions the girl whose arms he observes to be black, her face cut, and her bosom bruised: "What brutal hand has hurt you so?" he asked. "My own: I did it myself!" she answered quickly. "It's impossible." "I'll swear I did! He didn't touch me. I did it myself in a passion, and threw myself down here. He wasn't near me. He never laid a hand upon me!" And we are told of the strange interrogator of this strange sufferer, that in the white determination of her face, confronting him with this untruth, he saw enough of the last perversion and distortion of good surviving in a miserable breast, to be

mendacity line. Dunois, in *Quentin Durward*, thus seeks to exculpate the Duke of Orleans at his own cost—avouching that the Duke had only acted in friendship to him. "Dunois," replies Crawford, "if another had told me thou hadst brought the noble Prince into this jeopardy to serve any purpose of thine own, I had told him it was false." And Crawford as good as tells Dunois himself it is false, too.

William Losely, in *What will He do with It?* avows his innocent self guilty of theft, to screen his guilty son. "*He* a dark midnight thief!" George Morley exclaims of him; "believe him not, though his voice may say it. To screen, perhaps, some other man, he is telling you a noble lie." (Book x., ch. v.)

But fiction has no monopoly of such generous mendacities. The history of the first French Revolution and its reign of terror preserves the name of the Bruyset brothers, both imprisoned, and both men of sterling worth. The elder having signed some bills to raise funds for the defence of Lyons during the siege, the younger was brought to trial by mistake for his brother, and being shown the bill and asked if he knew the signature, and if it was his own, "The signature," said he, "is that of Bruyset"—an answer that sent him straight to death. He might be deemed worthy to pair off with that Marguerite de Hajar whom the royal widow of Alfonso V., believing her to be the mother of Ferdinand, his natural son (and successor), put to death by smothering—the victim sacrificing her reputation to save that of a more illustrious person.

stricken with remorse that he had ever come near her. Not so unworthy, after all, perhaps, to rank with Beaumont and Fletcher's Arethusa, when prince and nobles find her wounded by Philaster in the forest :

"*Pharam.* The princess, gentlemen ! Where's the wound, madam ?
Is it dangerous ?

Are. He has not hurt me.

Coun. I' faith, she lies ; he has hurt her in the breast ; look else.

Phar. Oh, sacred spring of innocent blood !

Dion. 'Tis above wonder ! Who should dare this ?

Are. I felt it not. . . .

Phar. Madam, who did it ?

Are. Some dishonest wretch ;

Alas ! I know him not, and do forgive him."

To Romola, so chilled in her wifely affections, Bernardo says, smiling, as he moves to the door, "You are contented, then, Madonna Orgogliosa ?" "Assuredly," is her sharp, short, quick reply. Poor Romola ! There was one thing, we are told, that would have made the pang of disappointment in her husband harder to bear : it was, that any one should know he gave her cause for disappointment.

To simulate prosperity may sometimes be shabby swindling but sometimes "noble pride," says Mr. Thackeray,—who, when he sees Eugenia with her dear children exquisitely neat and cheerful ; not showing the slightest semblance of poverty, or uttering the smallest complaint ; persisting that Squanderfield, her husband, treats her well, and is good at heart ; and denying that he leaves her and her young ones in want ; admires and reverences "that noble falsehood." Mrs. Gaskell's starving Esther, with a little unreal laugh exclaims to Mary Barton, "Oh, Mary, my dear ! don't talk of eating. We've the best of everything, and plenty of it, for my husband is in good work. I'd such a supper before I came out. I couldn't touch a morsel if you had it." John Barton's power of endurance had been called forth when he was a little child, and had seen his mother hide her daily morsel to share it among the children, and when he, being the eldest, had "told the

noble lie" that he was not hungry, could not eat a bit more, in order to imitate his mother's bravery, and still the sharp wail of the younger infants. Little Dorrit pretends to have been at a party,—“I could never have been of any use,” she protests, “if I had not pretended a little,”—she has said very little about it ; only a few words to make her father easy. What was Little Dorrit's party ? The closing paragraph of the chapter bearing that title will tell us. The shame, desertion, wretchedness, and exposure of the great capital ; the wet, the cold, the slow hours, and the swift clouds of the dismal night. Such was the party from which Little Dorrit went home, jaded, in the first grey of a rainy morning.

It is on the occasion of Tom Pinch forcing on an impecunious friend a piece of gold himself could so ill spare, with the assurance, “I don't want it ; indeed, I should not know what to do with it, if I had it,”—that Tom's author hazards the assertion of there being some falsehoods, on which men mount, as on bright wings, toward Heaven. Some truths there are, he goes on to say, cold, bitter, taunting truths, wherein your worldly scholars are very apt and punctual, which bind men down to earth with leaden chains. And who, he asks, would not rather have to fan him, in his dying hour, the lightest feather of a falsehood such as Tom's, than all the quills that have been plucked from the sharp porcupine, reproachful truth, since time began !

One illustration more. And that shall be from *The Traitor* of Shirley, when Sciarrha, in the fifth act, has stabbed Amidea, and Florio breaks open the door, and questions the dying girl, their sister : the brother that has dealt the fatal thrust addresses him that is come too late to ward it off,—

“Look, here's our sister ! so, so ; chafe her :
She may return ; there is some motion.

Flor. Sister !

Sci. Speak aloud, Florio ; if her spirit is not
Departed, I will seal this passage up ;

I feel her breath again.—Here's Florio would
 Fain take his leave.—So, so, she comes !
Flor. Amidea,
 How came this wound ?
Ami. I drew the weapon to it :
 Heaven knows my brother loved me."

§ IX.

PENAL SENTENCE OF LIFE, NOT DEATH.

Othello, Act v., Sc. 2.

WHEN Iago is brought in, a prisoner, Othello's first impulse is to look down towards his feet—though that's a fable ; and at the same time to strike him a mortal blow, cloven-footed or not,—though free to acknowledge, " If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee." In the supernatural, or preternatural, sense, Iago is not a devil ; and the Moor might have killed him had he but struck harder and cut deeper. " I bleed, sir ; but not killed," the wounded man says, with a seeming sneer, as Othello's sword is wrenched from him by the others. And then it occurs to the Moor that life is a heavier penal sentence to the really wretched, than ever death can be. And therefore, wishing so prodigious a villain as Iago to endure the heaviest sentence that could be passed, he was content to see him live, and to know that he would live on and on, long after the abused Moor himself should have found the release he sought, a few minutes hence. Better so ; there was, after all, nothing to regret in having missed his aim at Iago's life :

" I am not sorry neither ; I'd have thee live ;
 For, in my sense, 'tis happiness to die."

Shakspeare would have us understand, says Professor Dowden, that there is something more inimical to humanity than suffering—namely, an incapacity for noble pain. To die as Othello dies is indeed grievous. But " to live as

Iago lives, devouring the dust and stinging—this is more appalling.” Romeo deprecates a gentler judgment than death as the Prince’s doom upon him :

“ Be merciful ; say—death.
For exile hath more terror in his look,
Much more than death : do not say—banishment.”

Infuriated Antony bids Cleopatra begone, and adds, “ ’Tis well thou’rt gone, if it be well to live : but better ’twere thou fell’st into my fury.” “ A present death had been more merciful” as Antigonus murmurs, when complying with the behest of Leontes touching the fate of Perdita. Old John of Gaunt desiderates death as soon as life is for him bereft of what makes it endurable :

“ Convey me to my bed, then to my grave :
Love they to live, that love and honour have.”

It is a fond father that exclaims over a swooning daughter, whom he cannot welcome back to life,—

“ Do not live, Hero ; do not ope thine eyes ;
For did I think thou would’st not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life.”

Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him, said the prophet ; but weep sore for him that goeth away. “ And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue that remain of this evil family.” For, happier, to my mind, was he that died. Gibbon writes of that unhappy Tatian whose cruel judges compelled him to gaze on the execution of his son, that the fatal cord was fastened round his own neck : “ but in the moment when he expected, and perhaps desired, the relief of a speedy death, he was permitted to consume the miserable remnant of his old age in poverty and exile.” That Sigismond of Burgundy, who is a canonized saint and martyr, having shed the blood of his innocent son, and then discovered his error, and bewailed the irreparable loss, was sternly checked in his lamentations by an outspoken attendant : “ It is not *his* lot, O King ! it is

thine which calls for commiseration." Happier he that died,

"For the early dead we may bow the head,
And strike the breast, and weep ;
But, oh, what shall be said
For the living sorrow ?
For the living sorrow our grief—
Dumb grief—draws no relief
From tears, nor yet may borrow
Solace from sound, or speech ;—
For the living sorrow
That heaps to-morrow upon to-morrow
In piled-up pain, beyond Hope's reach !"

The Athenians, after the dreadful defeat at Syracuse, were too far gone in despair to demand their dead. "And," says Plutarch, "though they had such great miseries before their eyes, they looked upon their own case as still more unhappy, since they had yet many calamities to undergo, and were to meet the same fate at last." So the wrecked hero of the Odyssey :

"Wretch that I am ! what farther fates attend
This life of toils, and what my destined end ?
* * * * *
Happy, thrice happy, who, in battle slain,
Press'd, in Atreides' cause, the Trojan plain !"

Shakspeare's Talbot, retreating with his forces, before the Pucelle, envies Salisbury his death :

"O would I were to die with Salisbury !
The shame hereof will make me hide my head."

So York, in *King Richard II.*, borne down by a tide of woes : "I would to God, the king had cut my head off with my brother's." *Ah ! trop cruel Arbate, à quoi m'exposez-vous ?* is the upbraiding remonstrance of Racine's Monimie, when Arbate dashes the poison from her lips, and bids her, while Mithridate is dying, *Vivez !* Compare the style of Tullia, in Howard Payne's *Brutus* :

"And would he I should live ?

Priest.

He would.

Tal. Merciful villain ! . . . subtle traitor !

I'll not taste food, though immortality
Were grafted to each atom."

With scorn indescribable, with inexpressible loathing and contempt, is that wretched petitioner for the poor boon of existence, the pusillanimous Morris in *Rob Roy*, regarded by Helen MacGregor. "I could have bid you live," she said, "had life been to you the same weary and wasting burden that it is to me." In Rome's first Slave War, when the last stronghold of Eunus and his followers was attacked, Cleon of Agrigentum chose a soldier's death, and, sallying forth with all who breathed the same spirit as himself, he died fighting valiantly. Eunus escaped for the moment, but was afterwards taken in a cave. "He showed a pusillanimity far unlike the desperate courage of the rest"—the greater part of whom slew one another,—and his end was, to be eaten by vermin in a dungeon at Murgantia. Such was the state of the holders out of Jerusalem against Vespasian in A.D. 68, that the survivors envied the dead as released from suffering; those who were tormented in prison even thought them happy whose bodies were lying unburied in the streets. We are told of the disastrous close of the French expedition in the Children's Crusade, that seven ships were dashed to pieces by a storm off the Sardinian coast, and sunk with all their crews of at least 1,000 children. "Happier, however, were those who thus perished than the 4,000 who survived to a life of shame and sorrow," sold to the Mahometans for that very purpose.

"Farre better I it deeme to die with speed
Than waste in woe and wayfull miserie :
Who dies, the utmost dolor doth abyë ;
But who that lives, is lefte to wayle his losse :
So life is losse, and death felicitie :
Sad life worse than glad death."

Michelet says of Philippe de Valois' son, King Jean, that he took for his model the blind John of Bohemia, who fought, fastened to his horse, at Crécy : "But he had not the happiness to be killed, like John of Bohemia." Often quoted is dying Bayard's answer to Bourbon's expression

of pity : "It is not I who am to be pitied, for I die fighting for king and country : it is you who are to be pitied, for you fight against them." All too many times it hath happened, as Jeremy Taylor laments, that persons of a fair life and a clear reputation have lived to see both impeached and impaired, so that all the world says, "better had it been this man had died sooner." Well might Mary Stuart say with tears to Randolph, that "she perceived now they were not the happiest that lived the longest." In her Narrative of the first French Revolution, Mrs. Elliott infers that had the Court arrested and put to death the Duke of Orleans and some twenty others, the Revolution might have been suppressed, and in that case, she writes, "I should now dare to *regret* my poor friend the Duke, who, instead of dying thus regretted, lived to be despised and execrated," and to perish on a scaffold after all. Bolingbroke says of one who might fall a victim to power, but with whom would fall truth and reason, and the cause of liberty, "And he, who is buried in their ruins, is happier than he who survives them." "He would leave the world with more honour than they who would remain in it." Of frequent applicability in history are the lines in Southey's *Madoc* :

"Lament not him whom death may save from guilt ;
For all too surely in the conqueror
Thou wilt find one whom his own fears henceforth
Must make to all his kin a perilous foe,"

and a *heautontimoroumenos* to himself. "Yes, happier they who on the bloody field Stretch when their toil is done," muses a burdened spirit in Maturin's *Bertram*. The speaker is a female one ; and her mood is not so very far away from that of Rowe's Calista, when that Fair Penitent exclaims, unawed by sentence of death,

"That I must die, it is my only comfort."

Wordsworth apostrophizes a bereaved mother with a reference, designed to be consolatory by suggestive contrast, to the less happy doom of a once equally innocent

child, who "may now have lived till he could look With envy on thy nameless babe that sleeps Beside the mountain chapel, undisturb'd." For, as a sister songster, or songstress, asks :

"Are they indeed the bitterest tears we shed,
Those we let fall over the silent dead ?
Can our thoughts image forth no darker doom
Than that which wraps us in the peaceful tomb?"

And then the tale follows—the old, old tale, so often told—of a blighted existence ; of one whose

"life is one dark, fatal, deep eclipse.
Lead *her* to the green grave where ye have laid
The creature that ye mourn ;—let it be said :
'Here love, and youth, and beauty, are at rest :'
She only sadly murmurs, 'Blest,—most blest !'
And turns from gazing, lest her misery
Should make her sin, and pray to heav'n to die."

To have brought back her good name to Little Em'ly, the wretched Martha protests she would have died,—and more. "To have died, would not have been much—what can I say?—I would have lived . . . Lived to be old, in the wretched streets, and to wander about, avoided, in the dark . . . I would have done even that, to save her!" Polly Oliver, in *The Rock Ahead*, crying hard over her dying boy, is told by Squire Challoner, who speaks feelingly, as one that has felt, and that knows,—“You won't believe me, Mrs. Oliver, and it would be hard to expect you should ; but there are worse things in life than seeing your boy die.” And then he goes away. He has seen a son of his degraded and debased. We may recall and apply the *stances* of Malherbe :

“Le peu qu'ils ont vécu leur fut grand avantage,
Et le trop que je vis ne me fait que dommage,
Cruelle occasion du souci qui me nuit !
Quand j'avais de ma foi l'innocence première,
Si la nuit de ma mort m'eût privé de lumière,
Je n'aurais pas la peur d'une éternelle nuit.”

What is the doom of Lord Lytton's Lucretia, enforced

by the author's own characteristic capitals? "LIVE ON!" Death, as if spurning the carcase, stands inexorably afar off. Baffler of man's law, she has, like Varney, her accomplice, escaped with life. She is not unlikely to pass the extremest boundaries of age. Well, it is a penal sentence: "LIVE ON!" So with Gabriel Varney: "LET HIM LIVE!" It is a charmed life, amid prison tortures. In vain he kneels, the foul tears streaming down, and cries aloud, "I have broken all your laws, I will tell you all my crimes; I ask but one sentence—hang me up,—let me die!" Let him live, is the penal sentence. As with the passer of such another sentence in Lucan, who

"sensit pœnamque peti, veniamque timeri;
Vive, licet nolis, . . . dixit."

Vindictive Roger Chillingworth, in the *Scarlet Letter*, asks what better scheme of vengeance he could devise than to let Hester live—to give her medicines against all harm and peril of life—that so the scarlet letter might still blaze upon her bosom? And such is the very method of his revenge on the fallen minister. What art could do, the malignant physician exhausted on "this miserable priest." That he still breathed, and crept about on earth, was owing all to his enemy's skill. "Better he had died at once!" said Hester Prynne.—"Yes, woman, thou sayest truly!" cried old Roger Chillingworth, letting the lurid fire of his heart blaze out before her eyes. "Better had he died at once! Never did mortal man suffer what this man has suffered." But the avenger loved to have it so; and the penal sentence imposed by his ingenuity of vindictive art, was one of life, not death.

Bracciano's sentence is to the purpose, as set forth in a scene of *The Duke's Laboratory*:

"My sentence! For the punishment is mine,
As mine the fault was. She must die . . .
Die! yes. And then *my* punishment begins.
For I must live. There's punishment for both."

And so is a passage in the last scene of Talfourd's tragedy of *Glencoe*, where Henry Macdonald rushes with uplifted

arm to slay Glenlyon, and that arm is stopped by Lady Macdonald, with the scathing injunction,

“ Let him live. Glenlyon,
I pray you may have life stretch'd out beyond
The common span of mortals, to endure
The curse of Glencoe cleaving to your soul.”

CHAPTER IV.

Materia Medica.

§ I.

PHYSICKED IN VAIN.

All's Well that Ends Well, Act i., Sc. i.

A KING of France, name and date unknown, is the subject of colloquy in the opening scene of *All's Well that Ends Well*. Long has the king been ailing, and vain hitherto has been any and all medical aid. So vain in the past, that there is no hope for the future. Every resource would seem to have been exhausted, every remedy is a pronounced failure, every physician is at his wits' end. "What hope is there of his majesty's amendment?" the Countess of Roussillon inquires. "He hath abandoned his physicians, madam," is Lafeu's reply, "under whose practices he hath persecuted time with hopes; and finds no other advantage in the process but only the losing of hope by time." One cannot but recall the piteous case in the gospels of a certain woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. And one thinks too of the prophet's burden of woe against the daughter of Egypt: "In vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured." Were but that skilled physician, Helena's father, yet living, the French king might cherish some hope:

"If he were living, I would try him yet;—
Lend me an arm;—the rest have worn me out
With several applications:—nature and sickness—
Debate it at their leisure."

This king and his physicians are of a mind : he, that they cannot help him ; they, that they cannot help. Is it for Helen to essay a cure ? " How shall they credit a poor unlearned virgin, when the schools, embowelled of their doctrine, have left off the danger to itself ? "

Seeking relief, and finding none ; seeking it everywhere, to find it nowhere : one may apply a bit of Plautus,—*Pergo ad alios ; venio ad alios ; deinde ad alios ; una res.* It is all the same—go to whom one will. *Una res*—the same story, over and over again.

We are told of Jacob Cats, the Dutch poet, who nowadays, even by his own countrymen, is more praised than read, that after having in vain sought relief from all the medical men whom he consulted, he recovered his health by means of a powder given him by an old alchemist.

What avails it ? is the Dutch burgomaster's question and answer in one, to Margaret Brandt's offer, as a physician's daughter, to prescribe for his sick child. The learnedest leeches in all Rotterdam had all seen this patient, and bettered her not. Not one of them could master her complaint. One skilled wight called it spleen ; another, liver ; another, blood ; another, stomach ; and another declared her to be possessed. Margaret replies : " Your leeches are all in different stories . . . because they know not their trade.* I have heard my father say each is enamoured of some one evil, and seeth it with his bat's eye in every patient. Had they stayed at home, and ne'er seen your daughter, they had answered all the same, spleen, blood, stomach, lungs, liver, lunacy, or, as they call it, possession."—Rousseau expatiates on a painful malady from which he suffered being aggravated, instead of abated,

* Otheman assures Queen Elizabeth, in 1587, of a like incompetency, metaphorically speaking, on the part of those who had for a long time past been " doctoring " the Netherlands. " I believe, madam, that this sick person has had so many diseases for twenty years, and has had so many different doctors—some without experience, and others without fidelity—that the more despairing the patient is of his own case, the more honour it will be to the one who cures him."

by the treatment of the faculty. The doctors, he declares, did him as much harm as the disease did. He saw in succession Morand, Daran, Helvétius, Malouin, Thierry, who, all of them very learned, and all his friends, treated him each in his own way, gave him no kind of relief, and weakened his system not a little. The more strictly he followed their directions, the yellower, thinner, feebler he became. In another place Jean-Jacques thus repeats his experience in this matter : "Il y avait déjà plusieurs années que je m'étais livré tout-à-fait aux médecins, qui, sans alléger mon mal, avaient épuisé mes forces et détruit mon tempérament."

There is a crisis in the history, psychological and physiological, of Contarini Fleming—whose life-history is, indeed, expressly designated a psychological romance—when physician follows physician, and surgeon surgeon, without benefit to the patient, impatient. All the doctors he describes as holding different opinions, yet none of them right; they satirise each other in private interviews, and exchange compliments in consultations. One tells him to be quiet; another, to exert himself; one declares that he must be stimulated; another, that he must be soothed. He is, in turn, to be ever on horseback, and ever on a sofa. He is bled, blistered, boiled, starved, poisoned, electrified, galvanized; and at the end of a year he finds himself with exactly the same oppression on his brain,* and as far as ever from a cure. It is the same sort of story with that

* Being of a sanguine temperament, he had believed every assertion, and every week expected to find himself cured. "When, however, a considerable period of time had elapsed without any amelioration, I began to rebel against these systems, which induced so much exertion and privation, and were productive of no good. I was quite desperate of cure; and each day I felt more keenly that, if I were not cured, I could not live. I wished, therefore, to die unmolested. I discharged all my medical attendants, and laid myself down like a sick lion in his lair."—*Contarini Fleming*, Part iv., ch. vi.

Such, the author affirms, are the inevitable consequences of consulting men who decide by precedents which have no resemblance, and never busy themselves about the idiosyncrasy of their patients.

told by one of Mr. Barham's imitators, of a certain aged spinster, who had a phthisic so firmly rooted in her constitution, that all the physic which fifty doctors had prescribed, and she, by gallons, had imbibed, wrought, in its force, no jot of diminution :

"But, for the golden lining of her purse,
That, I confess, grew daily less, in ratio as her malady grew worse."

It is observable in the case of Shakspeare's King of France that, on his own showing, the most learned doctors in his realm had given him over : "Thé congregated college have concluded that labouring art can never ransom nature from her inaidable estate" (Act ii., Sc. 1). He therefore speaks of his complaint as a "past-cure malady," and of himself, by the doctors' own confession, as past help. In the next scene but one we hear of his majesty as entirely recovered,—no thanks to the congregated doctors, however, nor from any help in them. Lafeu is all amazement at such a restoration, after being "relinquished of the artists," "both of Galen and Paracelsus, and of all the learned and authentic fellows,—that gave him out incurable—not to be helped—uncertain life and sure death." To apply Cowper's couplet in the Table Talk :

"He thought the dying hour already come,
And a complete recovery struck him dumb."

Parson Ward, the Diarist, of Shakspeare's own good town, jots down this entry to our purpose : "A physician told a father that his sonne was a dead man. The father replied, I had rather a physician called him so a hundred times, than a judge on the bench once." Was not Descartes a dead man by the doctors' decree, for some twenty years of his life ? Captain Phœbus was a representative man when the master-chirurgion had to deal with him as dying of his wounds ; for in his case, says his author, "as it frequently happens, notwithstanding prognostics and diagnostics, Nature amused herself in saving the patient in the teeth of the leech." One of Swift's correspondents tried to comfort the Dean in his dejection by telling him, "I have the gout sometimes,

the asthma very much," etc., etc.,—"yet am in much better health than I was twelve years ago, when four top physicians pronounced me a dead man, and sent me abroad to die." Rousseau, in his *Confessions*, could look back upon a time, long ago, when the celebrated Morand, who, notwithstanding his skill, and the delicacy of his touch, made Jean Jacques suffer *des maux incroyables*, asserted of this his patient that within six months he would be a dead man, and must be. Mrs. Edwardes makes her De Bassompierre a type of the tenacity of invalids. "Why, five years ago, every physician in Paris and London said he must go in twelve months, told him to an inch how much, or rather how little, of lung he had left, and now he writes me word he is better than ever, and talks, in the spring, of going to St. Petersburg." Readers of *Carlyon's Year*, again, may remember how the hero is sentenced to death by his doctor, who tells him he may die at any moment, but that he can under no circumstances live for more than a year—whence the title of the tale. But the heart disease turns out to be an imposture; and the doomed man has the actual audacity to be living twenty years afterwards, without any sign that he is getting nearer to his grave.

When Chateaubriand was a young man, a refugee in London, his health seemed so completely broken up that his friends dragged him from physician to physician, only to get the assurance from one after another of them, "We can do nothing more for you, my dear sir." The most eminent of them thought he *might* last some months, or even a year longer, if he abstained from all exertion. We find Hannah More writing to Bishop Burgess in 1825, that she had been "raised up from twenty apparently mortal diseases, after having been given over." She adds, "I have been reckoning up no less than twelve physicians (and almost as many apothecaries) who have attended me at different times and places, not one of whom is alive. They taken, I left." Alluding to this, Mr. Wilberforce told her that, had she lived three centuries earlier, Dr. Carrick, her present physician, would have had her burnt for a witch, lest she should

kill him too. To such other instances as that of Samuel Rogers, who up to middle-life was regarded as one who had no business to be alive at all, on medical authority, and for the credit of the faculty ; of Pindemonte, the Veronese poet, who was another of the fore-doomed ; of Henry Howard, the R.A., who was given over in early life, and died in advanced age ; or, again, of Washington Irving, whose incessant cough provoked the prophecy, "He is not long for this world," from a prophet, who, thirty years later, presided at a public dinner given in honour of the consumptive invalid ; to these and the like may be added the instance of Mr. Wilberforce himself, who, in the spring of 1788, when his life of labour was yet before him, fell into so low a state, from a seemingly absolute decay of the digestive organs, that a consultation of physicians being held, their announcement to his family was, that he had not stamina to last a fortnight. The fortnight somehow swelled into a matter of some five-and-forty years.

As early as the time of Hippocrates (born B.C. 460) medical consultations appear to have been in vogue ; in one of his treatises he says that no physician ought to be ashamed to call in the aid of another, if he finds himself at a loss in the treatment of his patient. Any such sense of shame had become obsolete long before the day when Hogarth took for the motto for his Consultation of Physicians the pregnant phrase in Virgil, *Plurima mortis imago*,—Death in full many a form.

Mosca describes with gusto the fussy doings of a medical consultation over sham-sick Volpone, in Jonson's comedy of *The Fox*—how the patient's over-zealous friends,

"to seem the more officious
And flattering of his health, . . . have had,
At extreme fees, the college of physicians
Consulting on him, how they might restore him ;
Where one would have a cataplasim of spices,
Another a flay'd ape clapp'd to his breast,
A third would have it a dog, a fourth an oil,
With wild cat's skins," etc.

The Emperor Charles the Sixth bade the physicians who

were disputing around his death-bed concerning the nature of his malady, to cease their controversy yet awhile, yet a very little while : only let him be gone first, and then they might open his body and welcome, and so arrive at the conclusion they were now guessing at so widely, so wildly, so unwisely, and with such waste of temper and of time.

Pert Lisette in Molière would fain know why four doctors are called in—is not one enough to kill a patient ? In vain is she snubbed with a peremptory “ Hold your tongue : four to advise are worth more than one.” Can’t Miss manage her dying without the help of those gentry ? she asks the papa ; who snappishly rebukes her with the query, Do doctors put to death, then ? Not a doubt of that, Lisette can assure him,—and she quotes an acquaintance who proved, by the best of good reasons, that you ought never to say, Such a person is dead of a fever or inflammation of the lungs, but, is dead of four physicians and a pair of apothecaries. In a later scene Molière gives us a solemn consultation in due form, beginning with the doctors taking their seats, and coughing the properly pompous preliminary cough, and then launching out into irrelevant gossip to their hearts’ content. Called upon to deliver their opinion as to the state of the patient they have severally examined, they egregiously differ, without agreeing to differ, and break up in most admired confusion.

Dr. Davy, in his book on the Ionian Islands, describes a medical consultation which reminds his readers of Molière ; and the “ Greek custom ” he describes was not so very long ago a thing common to the physicians of Europe at large. The learned Greeks in the most formal manner discussed in an ante-room the sick man’s case—each in turn giving a kind of clinical lecture, in which the history of the disease was traced, the rationale of the symptoms given, the supposed exact nature of the malady, and its nosological place assigned, and a mode of treatment proposed, founded on the views taken. “ It was an ingenious theoretical display of ability, each striving to appear to most advantage,” and much better adapted to impress the audience (the assembled

family and friends) with the cleverness of the speakers, than to be of practical use to the patient.

A consultation of physicians is the subject of the fourth letter in Anstey's *Bath Guide*, wherein Mr. Simpkin Barnard describes how, as he every day grew worse and worse, he was advised by his doctor to send for a nurse, and the nurse was so willing his health to restore, that she begged him to send for a few doctors more ; for when any difficult work's to be done, many heads can despatch it much sooner than one :

"And I find there are doctors enough in this place,
If you want to consult in a dangerous case.
So they all met together, and thus began talking :
' Good doctor, I'm yours—'tis a fine day for walking—
Sad news in the papers—God knows who's to blame !
The colonies seem to be all in a flame—
This Stamp Act, no doubt, might be good for the crown,
But I fear 'tis a pill that will never go down—
What can Portugal mean ?—Is she going to stir up
Convulsions and heats in the bowels of Europe ?
'Twill be fatal if England relapses again
From the ill blood and humours of Bourbon and Spain.'
Says I, ' My good doctors, I can't understand
Why the deuce ye take so many patients in hand ;
Ye've a great deal of practice, as far as I find,
But since ye've come hither do pray be so kind
To write me down something that's good for the wind.
No doubt ye are all of ye great politicians,
But at present *my* bowels have need of physicians ;
Consider my case in the light it deserves,
And pity the state of my stomach and nerves.'
But a tight little doctor began a dispute
About administrations, Newcastle and Bute,
Talk'd much of economy, much of profuseness.—
Says another—' This case, which at first was a looseness,
Is become a tenesmus, and all we can do
Is to give him a gentle cathartic or two ;
First get off the phlegm that adheres to the *plicæ*,
Then throw in a med'cine that's pretty and spicy ;—
A peppermint draught,—or a—Come, let's begone,
We've another bad case to consider at one.' "

§ II.

"THROW PHYSIC TO THE DOGS."

Macbeth, Act v., Sc. 3.

"THROW physic to the dogs,—I'll none of it," resolves Macbeth, when he feels himself past physic; for, "what rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug" would aught avail to cleanse his stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff which weighed upon his heart? Martin Luther had, upon other grounds, given himself over, when he said to the lady who wished he might live forty years more, that rather than live forty years more he would give up his chance of Paradise; adding, "I have ceased consulting the physicians. They tell me I am to live another year [1545]—so, meantime, I shall get on as well as I may, and make myself comfortable, eating and drinking whatever I fancy," and throwing physic to the dogs. In his table-talk Luther had already reported of himself when ill at Schmalcalden, that the physicians there made him take as much medicine as if he had been a great bull. "Alack for him that depends upon the aid of physic! . . . A sound regimen produces excellent effects. When I feel indisposed, by observing a strict diet and going to bed early, I generally manage to get round again. . . . We find Avicenna and Galen prescribing wholly different remedies for the same disorders. I won't pin my faith to any of them, ancient or modern." "I expect that exercise and change of air do more good than all their purgings and bleedings." When Doctor Lundin, in his walk to his country lodgings with Roland Graeme, comes across divers patients and non-patients, he shrewdly discriminates between the two classes as individualized by the representative men he meets. Yonder fellow with the red bonnet, and the great rough baton in his hand, is by the doctor believed to have verily the strength of a tower: "He has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the

liberal sciences by having one pennyworth of medicaments. —But see you that man with the *facies Hippocratica*?" pointing out a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance: "that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony—he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine; and, for his own single part, will go farther to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceuticals, than half the county besides." Montaigne professed for his part to think of physic as much good or ill as any one would have him, for, he thanked God, they had no traffic together. "I am of a quite contrary humour to other men, for I always despise it; and when I am sick, instead of recanting, or entering into composition with it, I begin yet more to hate and fear it, telling those who importune me to take physic that they must at least give me time to recover my strength and health, that I may be the better able to support and encounter the violence and danger of the potion." Madame, Mère du` Régent (Orleans), used to reject with scorn, on her arrival at the French court, every overture of medical aid, declaring that she wanted no doctor, not she, "*qu'elle n'avait jamais été ni saignée ni purgée, et que, quand elle se trouvait mal, elle faisait deux lieues à pied, et qu'elle était guérie.*" She would have said or sung with Crashaw, if she could,

"Go, now, and with some daring drug
Bait thy disease; and, while they tug,
Thou to maintain their precious strife,
Spend the dear treasures of thy life.
Go, take physic, dote upon
Some big-named composition,
The oraculous doctors' mystic bills—
Certain hard words made into pills;
And what at last shalt gain by these?
Only a costlier disease.
That which makes us have no need
Of physic, that's physic indeed."

Robert Burns was a proud father when he wrote to Mrs.

Dunlop of his little fellow, "partiality apart, the finest boy I have of a long time seen," that "He is now seventeen months old, has the smallpox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and yet never had a grain of doctors' drugs in his bowels." Whatever you do, beware of doctoring, is the stringent injunction of Lord Martindale to Miss Yonge's Violet, in *Heartsease*, when his grandson seems ailing; for the old lord had seen more than enough of doctoring, and resolved that his two youngest should run wholesomely wild, and never be dosed, till they were six years old. "Throw away lessons and physic. Give him other children to play with, make him wear a brown holland pinafore, and let him grope in the dirt." So a candid physician counselled, and the counsel is believed to have saved the child's life. Not every physician is addicted to physic himself, however free in prescribing for others. There was a book recently published with the intent to familiarize the Portuguese nation with correct colloquial English, the compiler of which, in illustration of the fact that our doctors do not invariably follow their own prescriptions, has this good story to tell in his own idiomatic way, which is piquant enough: "A physician eighty years of age had enjoied of a health unalterable. Theirs friends did him of it compliments every days. 'Mister doctor,' they said to him, 'you are admirable man. What you make then for to bear you as well?' 'I shall tell you it, gentlemen,' he was answered them: 'and I exhort you in same time at to follow my exemple. I live of the product of my ordering, without take any remedy who I command to my sick.'"

Stories about doctors have been said to prove, more than any others, how far one idea may be worked out with energy and perseverance; there being only one joke which it is possible to make on the profession of medicine in the abstract, as there is but one which is to be made with propriety on that of the cure of souls. "Of the one it is traditionally humorous to remark that the medicines kill—of the other, that the sermons send to sleep." Whatever

foundation there may be for the ordinary joke about sermons, it is questioned whether the attack so often made on the doctors is altogether fair; and questioned on this ground—that statistics are wanting to show how many people drink the potions which their medical attendants provide, and how many dispose of them in clandestine ways. If the latter class are to the former in the proportion of three to one, it would be just to draw the inference that the drugs are not always directly fatal. And even “if there were no doctors, it is probable that people would die nearly as frequently.” A celebrated physician pronounced the best practice to be that which does nothing—the next best that which does little; and another eminent authority has declared that, in a large proportion of cases treated by ordinary doctors, the disease is cured by nature and not by them, and that in a smaller proportion of cases the disease is cured by nature in spite of them; so that in a majority of cases it would fare as well with patients if all remedies, especially drugs, were abandoned.

General Platow's corps of Cossacks in the Eylau campaign had but one doctor; and when the Emperor talked of employing more, the General said, “God forbid! for the fire of the enemy is not half so fatal as a drug.”

A leading review discussed with some interest, not very long ago, the practical problem raised by the Peculiar People's refusal to call in medical assistance in cases of disease, and their allowing their children to die for the want of it; in the course of which discussion it was conceded that, as regards an adult patient, it might seem a piece of tyranny to force medicine on a man who did not believe in its efficacy—it being pronounced almost an open question whether he would not be generally right, and a delicate one whether the health of the world would be improved or deteriorated by the extermination of all doctors. The reviewer holds it for certain that in the last century Government would have enforced remedies, such as excessive bleeding, which we should now hold to be directly injurious; and deems it not impossible that our descendants may think

that the popularity of some remedies now in such ample demand and supply is also an illustration of our ignorance.

It is a distinguished American physician who describes some "very silly people" as thinking a certain sage old doctor did not believe in medicine, because he gave less than the poor half-taught creatures in the smaller neighbouring towns, who took advantage of people's sickness to disgust and disturb them with all manner of ill-smelling and ill-behaving drugs. In point of fact, the older and wiser man hated to give anything noxious or loathsome to those who were uncomfortable enough already, unless he was very sure it would do good,—in which case, he never played with drugs, but gave good, honest, efficient doses. John Dryden, in the Epistle to his namesake, esquire, distinguishes between your skilled physician, like Garth, "generous as his muse," and the apothecary-tribe, as regards the dispensing of drugs: *they*, the former,

"labouring for relief of human kind,
With sharpened sight some remedies may find ;
The apothecary-train is wholly blind ;
From files a random recipe they take,
And many deaths of one prescription make."

In his adaptation from Chaucer of the *Cock and the Fox*, the same vigorous rhymester imputes to chanticleer the lines—

"But neither pills nor laxatives I like,
They only serve to make the well man sick :
Of these his gain the sharp physician makes,
And often gives a purge, but seldom takes ;
They not correct, but poison all the blood,
And ne'er did any but the doctors good.
Their tribe, trade, trinkets, I defy them all,
With every work of 'pothecary's hall."

Chaucer's Arcyte was in evil case when neither bleeding

"Ne drynk of herbes may ben his helpyng.

* * * * *

And certeynly wher natur will not wirche,
Farewel, phisik ; go bere the man to chirche."

Cowper felt *that*, towards the last, when, as Hayley tells us

of him in Norfolk, medicine appeared to have little or no influence on his complaint, and his aversion at the sight of it was extreme. There was a crisis in Rousseau's physical history, when, persuaded that the doctors to whom he had wholly given himself up, had exhausted his strength and ruined his constitution, without at all alleviating his sufferings, he determined "de guérir ou mourir sans médecins et sans remèdes. Je leur dis adieu pour jamais." This he wrote in *Les Confessions*. In a later work, *Les Rêveries*, he professes to have never had much confidence in medicine, but a good deal too much in doctors, some of whom he esteemed, even loved, and allowed to "gouverner ma carcasse avec pleine autorité." Fifteen years' experience had taught him better, to his cost, he says; and it was not until he threw physic to the dogs, showed his physicians to the door, and betook himself to *les seules lois de la nature*, that he recovered his former health. Not Jonson's bedridden Volpone could be more resolute against drugs and doctors, as Mosca reports him to Corbaccio :

"He will not hear of drugs.
He has no faith in physic : he does think
Most of your doctors are the greater danger
And worse disease to escape."

So Galt's west country laird is said to have nourished a dislike to the faculty, declaring that since doctors had learned to keep count like shopkeepers, "when they get a man ill they hae as natural an interest to keep him ill as the wabsters and souters in the health and well-being of their customers." "I hae nae broo o' doctors," he angrily exclaims, when told that one has been sent for; "for though they may learn at the college to haggle aff a sair leg, or to howk out a rotten tooth, they ken as little about complaints in the stomach as a loch-leech, and no sae muckle; for the leech, poor thing, has a natural knowledge o' what it's about, and seeks nae fee but a pickle saut on its neb, and a drap caller water in a bottle. Nane o' the droguery and the roguery o' doctors for me." If Roderick Random puts into his mouth the "diaphoretic boluses" brought by his Welsh

friend Morgan, it is only that, by a seeming compliance, he may not affront the blood of Caractacus by intimating a mistrust of his medical capacity—for, as soon as Morgan's back is turned, Roderick spits out the odious preparation, and washes his mouth with water-gruel, (none too palatable a tongue-cleanser, surely). Camille, in Mr. Charles Reade's French story, "never drinks a drop of his medicine ; he pours it into the ashes under the grate, I caught him in the fact," Mademoiselle Rose reports. In the same author's *Hard Cash*, Julia Dodd confesses to having cultivated her geraniums with all her medicines, liquid and solid ; "and only one geranium had died. In his *Cloister and Hearth*, the first thing Peter Brandt does when called in to a far-gone civic dignitary at Rotterdam, who had been bled and purged to nothing, is to fling a battalion of bottles out of window, and leave it open. When Mr. Snowball in *The Catspaw* revolts at last from the tyranny of his Doctor Pet-goose, he tells him he has swallowed so many of his Paradise Pills that he wonders he has not followed their direction ; and hardly is he rid of his tyrant's presence when this little bit of action ensues :

"*Snowb.* I've done with him, as I'll prove, done with him, and his Pills of Paradise, too. [*Takes pill-box from his pocket.*] Rosemary, take these pills and—[*Offering pill-box.*]

Rosem. Thank you, sir,—but I always refused the Doctor himself.

Snowb. Take 'em, and throw 'em into the street.

Rosem. Consider, sir. Some unoffending dog may find 'em."

The consideration is considerate, and delicately implies that throwing physic literally to the dogs may do *them* a mischief, however salutary the flinging feat may be to the flinger.

Commodore Trunnion held out to the last, against medeciners, churgeons, leeches, and potticaries, all and sundry. "Here has been a doctor," the sick old tar told Peregrine, that wanted to stow me chock-full of physic ; but when a man's hour is come, what signifies his taking his departure with a 'pothecary's shop in his hold ?—I told him as how I

could slip my cable without his direction or assistance, and so he hauled off in dudgeon." The sturdy old salt is a representative man in fiction of many who have made a name in fact.

Biographers of Sir Edward Coke tell us of that octogenarian Chief Justice, that up to the time of his meeting with the severe accident which resulted in his death, he had constantly refused "all dealings with doctors;" and that he was wont to "give God solemn thanks that he never gave his body to physic, nor his heart to cruelty, nor his hand to corruption." When turned of eighty—as another octogenarian ex-Chief Justice records of him—and his strength rapidly declining, a vigorous attempt was made to induce him to take medical advice; of which we have a lively account in a letter from Mr. Mead to Sir Martin Stuteville:* "Sir Edward Coke being now very infirm in body, a friend of his sent him two or three doctors to regulate his health, whom he told that he had never taken physic since he was born, and would not now begin." Adding, that he had now upon him a disease which not all the drugs of Asia, the gold of Africa, or all the doctors of Europe could cure—old age. He had the grace, however, to thank them while dismissing them—with a fee, too, or *solatium*, of twenty pieces to each man.

When Petrarch was sensibly failing, his physician Dondi told him that his diet was too cold, that he should avoid fruit and raw vegetables, etc. But Petrarch, who had written four books of invectives against the faculty, had no faith in medicine; and if he was civil to Dondi, it was as a philosopher, not as a physician. He would have fraternized with that other Italian poet commemorated by Leigh Hunt, who wrote a whole poem in praise of strawberries:

"For my part, I confess I fairly swill
And stuff myself with strawberries; and abuse

* Harleian, MSS. Quoted in Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chief Justices*, Vol. I., p. 334.

The doctors all the while, draught, powder, pill,
And wonder how any sane head can choose
To have their nauseous jalaps, and their bill.
All which, like so much poison, I refuse.
Give me a glut of strawberries ; and lo !
Sweet thro' my blood, and very bones, they go."

Lucky indeed, exclaims *The Doctor*, were the patient who, sending for Morison's Pills, should be supplied with Tom D'Urfey's instead ; and happy man would be his dole who, when he had made up his mind in dismal resolution to a dreadful course of drastics, should find that gelastics had been substituted, not of the Sardonian kind, but composed of the most innocent and salutiferous ingredients, gently and genially alterative, mild in their operation, and safe and sure in their effects. The Spectator avows, for his part, that the only physic which had brought him safe to the confines of old age, and which he prescribed to his friends, was abstinence. "This is certainly the best physic for prevention, and very often the most effectual against the present distemper [1710]. In short, my recipe is, 'Take nothing.'" Swift's journal to Stella, of the year after, contains the characteristic entry, "Fig for your physician and his advice, Madam Dingley [Stella's companion] ; if I grow worse, I will ; otherwise I will trust to temperance and exercise : your fall of the leaf ; what care I when the leaves fall ? I am sorry to see them fall with all my heart ; but why should I take physic because leaves fall from trees ? that won't hinder them from falling. If a man falls from a horse, must I take physic for that ?—I am glad at heart to hear poor Stella is better ; use exercise and walk, spend pattens and spare potions, wear out clogs and waste claret." In his *Polite Conversation*, the dean makes the colonel protest that, after all, kitchen physic is the best physic ; to which my lady adds, "And the best doctors in the world are Doctor Diet, Doctor Quiet, and Doctor Merryman." The last patronymic was of note in the faculty, a century after the dean's day.

One of Moore's letters is descriptive of a recent illness he

had undergone, as to which, however, he really believed the apothecary to be, "as usual," nine-tenths of the disease; "for he physicked me into such a state of debility that, when the original complaint was gone, there was another, much worse, of his own manufacture, to proceed upon;" but at last the little poet took Molière's method of dealing with his doctor, and became, accordingly, as well as ever: "Il m'ordonne des remèdes, je ne les fais point, et je guéris." The Ingoldsby rhymester is frank in his avowal,

"I abominate physic, I care not who knows
There's nothing on earth I detest like 'a dose'—
That yellowish-green-looking fluid, whose hue
I consider extremely unpleasant to view,
With its sickly appearance that trenches so near
On what Homer defines the complexion of Fear;
 Χλωρόν δέος I mean,
 A nasty pale green,
Tho' for want of some word that may better avail,
I presume, our translators have rendered it 'pale.'"

Honest Jacqueline was Molière's own mouthpiece when she defied Doctor Sganarelle and all his works: "Ma fi, jè me moque de ça, et jè ne veux point faire de mon corps une boutique d'apothicaire." So lusty a lass was not going to make a doctor's shop of her inside, at any one's bidding.

Napoleon at St. Helena, when his health broke up, in the autumn of 1818, refused to take medicine, however pressing his medical advisers. When Prince Potemkin fell ill of the disease which carried him off, the Czarina despatched two of her first physicians to attend on him; but he would give no manner of heed to them and their drugs. The Czar Alexander I., in the fatal November of 1825, when Sir James Wylie earnestly counselled the adoption of immediate remedies, replied, smiling, "I have no need of you, or of your Latin pharmacopœia—I know how to treat myself;" and in spite of all that could be said, he persisted in his refusal to take medicine. The malady which proved fatal to Archbishop Whately might possibly, a biographer suggests, have been checked by active remedies; but his Grace refused to swallow any medicine, and more than once told his

medical advisers "that they might throw physic to his dogs, who, however, though they dealt in *bark* [the archbishop was an inveterate punster], were better judges than to drink it." His insuperable repugnance to medicine is attributed in part to "a charlatanical course of drastic drugging" to which he was subjected soon after his arrival in Ireland. Ever after this experience he is said to have limited his faith in medicine to the homœopathic system. The last four weeks of his life were "one long torment," the pains of which might have been allayed by a "judicious administration of anodynes and opiates ; but Dr. Whately, like Fox and O'Connell, refused to swallow drugs." Urgent friends were answered with the second-hand answer, that their advice was like their physic, more agreeable to give than take.* The only medical maxim, perhaps, of which that master of maxims would have unconditionally approved, might be that of the School of Health at Salerno, which bids him that is in need of doctors, take for doctors these three eligibles—a cheerful mind, relaxation from toil, and temperate diet :

"Si tibi deficient medici, medici tibi fiant
Hæc tria ; mens hilaris, requies, moderata diæta."

If doctors are addicted to dog Latin, it is only in keeping with the destiny of their drugs, in the case at least of those whose maxim is Macbeth's, to throw physic to the dogs.

Scarcely have the consulting physicians marched off from Mr. Simpkin Barnard's bedroom, in Anstey's *New Bath Guide*, "each his cane at his nose," when Jenny comes in, who has heard all their prose, and she'll teach them, she vows, at their next consultation, to come and take fees for the good of the nation, (for all their talk has been of politics). So,

"she seized all the stuff that the doctor had sent,
And out of the window she flung it down souse,
As the first politician went out of the house ;
Decoctions and syrups around him all flew,
The pill, bolus, julep, and apozem too ;

* Anecdotal Memoirs of Archbishop Whately, vol. ii., pp. 259, 265.

His wig had the luck a cathartic to meet,
 And squash went the gallipot under his feet.
 She said 'twas a shame I should swallow such stuff,
 When my bowels were weak; and the physic so rough."

Mr. Gill, the then "eminent Cook at Bath," was more to Jenny's mind, and she would have sided with the sweet singer, sweet-toothed one at least, who invidiously compared the modes and merits respectively of Galen and of Gill:

"Your spirits and your blood to stir, old Galen gives a pill;
 But I the forced-meat ball prefer, prepared by Master Gill.
 While he so well can broil and bake, I'll promise to fulfill,
 No other physic e'er to take than what's prescribed by Gill."

§ III.

METAPHYSICAL MALADY AND PHYSICAL ART.

Macbeth, Act v., Sc. 3.

THE Doctor had already declared Lady Macbeth's disease to be beyond his practice, when questioned by her husband, "How does your patient, Doctor?" Not so sick, is the reply, as troubled with thick-coming fancies, that keep her from her rest; a reply that at once stirs Macbeth to the wistful utterance, "Cure her of that,"—and to the instantly ensuing query,

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
 Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
 Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
 And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
 Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
 Which weighs upon the heart?"

Doctor.

Therein the patient
 Must minister to himself."

More needs she the divine than the physician, the latter had said of the sleep-walking lady. And now if Macbeth be such a patient as he describes, to himself must that patient minister: *he*, the physician, can *not* minister to a

mind so diseased. Algazzāli, the Light of Islam and Pillar of the Mosque, when stricken by that strange disease which involved loss of voice as well as loss of appetite, and entire prostration of physical energies, was declared by physicians to be beyond hope of recovery, "unless he could shake off the sadness which depressed him." Johnson seems to have approved and admired the resolve of Dr. Nichols never to attend a patient, whatever his distemper might be, if his mind was not at ease; for he believed that no medicines would be of any avail to one thus disquieted. As Mr. Kennedy tells his wife in *Phineas Finn*, "I can see now what it is that makes your head ache. It is not the stomach. You are quite right there.—Dr. Macnuthrie is a learned man, but I doubt whether he can do anything for such a malady." "You are quite quite right, Robert; he can do nothing." "It is a malady you must cure for yourself, Laura." Perhaps the lady, if addicted to Latin, might have applied with a note of admiration what Pamphilus in the *Andria* utters with a note of interrogation, *Cum egomet possim in hac re medicari mihi!* Pope's imitation of Horace makes easy work of metaphysical malady as compared with physical:

"The case is easier in the mind's disease;
There all men may be cured whene'er they please."

There is a chapter in Mr. John Stuart Mill's Autobiography called "A Crisis in my Mental History," some pages of which relate to the deep dejection which overcame him at the period in question, "a grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear," for which he sought no relief by speaking to others of what he felt. If he had loved any one sufficiently to make confiding his griefs a necessity, he should not, he says, have been in the condition described. He felt, too, that his was not an interesting, or in any way respectable distress: there was nothing in it to attract sympathy. "Advice, if I had known where to seek it, would have been most precious. The words of Macbeth to the physician often occurred to my thoughts." But

there was no one, it seems, on whom the sufferer could build the faintest hope of such assistance—not a friend, at that time, to whom he had any hope of making his condition intelligible. It was, however, abundantly intelligible to himself; and the more he dwelt upon it, the more hopeless it appeared.*

Dr. Vincent shakes his head after his puzzled examination of Margaret in the story of *Henry Dunbar*, and tells her friends, "It is a case in which my services can be of very little avail: the young lady is suffering from some mental uneasiness which she refuses to communicate"—and there an end. What doctor can minister to such a disease? whose physic avail to cope with such metaphysics? As Spenser's hermit has it,

"In vaine of me ye hope for remedie,
And I likewise in vaine do salves to you applie.

For in yourselfe your onely helpe doth lie,
To heale yourselfe, and must proceed alone
From your owne will to cure your maladie.
Who can cure him that will be cured of none?"

In the opening stanza of another canto of his great poem Spenser starts the question,

"What equall torment to the grieffe of mind,
And pynning anguish hid in gentle hart,
That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkind,
And nourisheth her own consuming smart?
What medicine can any leaches art
Yield such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her maladie impart?"

As Roger Chillingworth tells a too reticent patient, the heart of whose mystery he would pluck out, he to whom only the outward and physical evil is laid open, knoweth, oftentimes,

* "In all probability my case was by no means so peculiar as I fancied it, and I doubt not that many others have passed through a similar state; but the idiosyncrasies of my education had given to the general phenomenon a special character, which made it seem the natural effect of causes that it was hardly possible for time to remove. I frequently asked myself if I could, or if I was bound to go on living, when life must be passed in this manner."—*Autobiography of J. S. Mill*, p. 140.

but half the evil which he is called upon to cure : a bodily disease, which we look upon as whole and entire within itself, may, after all, be but a symptom of some ailment in the spiritual part. "Thus, a sickness, a sore place, in your spirit, hath its appropriate manifestation in your bodily frame. Would you, therefore, that your physician heal the bodily evil? How may this be, unless you first lay open to him the wound or trouble in your soul?" Mr. Merdle's skilled physician has this to say of him, that he can find nothing the matter with Mr. Merdle—that he has the constitution of a rhinoceros, the digestion of an ostrich, and the concentration of an oyster—that as to nerves he is about as invulnerable as Achilles. "How such a man should suppose himself unwell without reason, you may think strange. But I have found nothing the matter with him. He may have some deep-seated recondite complaint. I can't say. I only say, that at present I have not found it out." An equally skilled physician of Lord Lytton's picturing, from the life,—described as being, what every great physician should be, a profound philosopher, though with a familiar ease of manner, and a light offhand vein of talk, which made the philosophy less sensible to the taste than any other ingredient in his pharmacopœia,—examines Gentleman Waife all over, alone, sounds the old man's vital organs with ear and with stethoscope, talks to him now on his feelings, now on the news of the day, and then steps out to tell his friend, "Something on the heart; I can't get at it; perhaps you can. Take off that something, and the springs will react, and my patient will soon recover." It is the same doctor that, later in the story, is called in to Lady Montfort, and pronounces hers to be a case in which physicians can be of very little use: there is something on the mind which his prescriptions fail to reach; worry of some sort—decidedly worry. And unless she herself can either cure that, or will make head against it, worry may bring to an abruptly fatal issue, in her case, a good chronic silent grief of some years' standing.—At the bride of Lammermoor's flighty levity, after the dreadful scene at the castle,

—a mood chequered by fits of deep silence and melancholy and of capricious pettishness,—Lady Ashton, we read, “became much alarmed, and consulted the family physicians. But as her pulse indicated no change, they could only say that the disease was on the spirits”—and that was beyond them. There was an occasion upon which Mrs. Gamp shook her head mysteriously, pursed up her lips, and said, “There’s fevers of the mind as well as body. You may take your slime draughts till you flies into the air with effervescence ; but you won’t cure that.” Not to her, or the like of her, could or would or should the moody Baron in *The Curfew* apply—

“Now I have heard you have a charm for this,
And can make clean my fancy—recreate me,
What once I was, a reasonable man,
Full of the common feelings of my kind,
Praying with unclogg’d heart ; so food shall nourish,
And I shall laugh and weep like other men,
And sleep refresh me, as the dews of heaven
Lift up the languid blossoms.”

We laugh very often, says Mr. Disraeli, at the errors of medical men ; but if we would only, when we consult them, have strength of mind enough to extend to them something better than a half-confidence, we might be cured the sooner. “How often, when the unhappy disciple of Æsculapius is perplexing himself about the state of our bodies, we might throw light upon his obscure labours by simply detailing to him the state of our minds !” His Venetia he describes as continuously in a state which to strangers might seem insensibility, but which her mother knew to be despair : she never moved, never sighed, never wept, took no notice of anything that occurred, sought relief in no resources : she had, apparently, no physical ailment, yet remained pale and silent, plunged in an absorbing paroxysm of overwhelming woe. “The physicians (for hopeless as Lady Annabel could not resist esteeming their interference, Venetia was now surrounded by physicians) shook their heads, prescribed different remedies, and gave contrary opinions.” Another practised

hand shows us Olivia Marchmont lying in a darkened chamber, and suffering under some vague illness, for which the Swampington doctor is fain to prescribe quinine, in utter unconsciousness of the real nature of the disease he is called upon to cure. Many chapters later she utters the impatient cry, "Is there no cure for this disease? no relief but madness or death?" The doctor's wife essays to find out from her what the doctor himself cannot. "These medical men," quoth that astute lady, inviting confidence, "watch us women in the agonies of hysteria; they hear our sighs, they see our tears, and in their awkwardness and ignorance they prescribe commonplace remedies out of their pharmacopœia. . . . I fear it is the mind, the mind which has been overstrained. Is it not so?" She *was* ill, we are told farther on; and George Weston attended her continually; but he found it very difficult to administer to such a sickness as hers, and could only shake his head despondently when he felt her feeble pulse, or listened to the slow beatings of her heart. Dr. Aubertin, in *White Lies*, appeals to the women of the family to aid him in detecting the real cause of Camille's malady: "He puzzles me. It is not his wound that is killing him, there's something on his mind. You, Josephine, with your instincts, do help me, do pray, for pity's sake," etc. Mr. Charles Reade makes his Dr. Sampson prescribe with characteristic acumen for Julia Dodd, upon whom so much medical aid from all quarters has hitherto been quite thrown away: detecting no bodily ailment, why make her body a test-tube for poisons? he is for caution, and for working on the safe side of the hedge, till they are less in the dark. "Mind ye, young women at her age are kittle cattle; they have gusts o' this, and gusts o' that, the unreasonable imps! D'ye see these two pieces pasteboard? They are tickets for a ball I prescribe them." Advertizing in his "Recollections" to the absurd tyranny which Almacks' balls and their patronesses once exercised over the fashionable world, Sir Henry Holland tells us, "Even as a physician I was often witness of the effects of this dominating passion, having seen more than

one case, defying medicine, cured by a ticket for Almacks' opportunely obtained." G ron te demands of Sganarelle, in Moli re, "Serait-il possible, monsieur, que vous puissiez aussi gu rir cette maladie d'esprit?" "Oui, laissez-moi faire," says the other, "j'ai des rem des pour tout." In his satirical treatise on Right of Precedence between Physicians and Civilians, Dean Swift alleges the force of physic to go further than the body, and to be of use in relieving the mind under most of its disorders; and the writer draws upon his own experience, under the direction of "my worthy parish minister, who is indeed an excellent divine, and withal an able physician; and a good physician only to be the better divine. That good man has often quieted my conscience with an emetic, has dissipated troublesome thoughts with a cordial or exhilarating drops, has cured me of a love-fit by breathing a vein, and removed anger and revenge by the prescription of a draught, thence called bitter;" in these and other instances convincing his patient that physic is of use to the very soul, as far as that depends on the crisis of the body. For, as Lucretius has it,

"Mentem sanari corpus ut  grem
Cernimus, et flecti medicin  posse videmus."

One of Dr. Channing's confidential epistles begins: "The office to which your letter calls me, of ministering to a mind diseased, is, you well know, one of the most difficult, because physical maladies almost always have a large share in mental ones," as well as because inward suffering so often springs from an individuality, a peculiarity of mind, which another cannot easily comprehend. Swift makes it observable, in his Scheme for an Hospital for Incurables, that although the bodies of men be affected with an infinite variety of disorders, which elude the power of medicine, and are often found to be incurable, yet their minds are also overrun with an equal variety, which no skill, no power, no medicine, can alter or amend. And this latter species of incurables, ought, he submits, principally to engage our attention and beneficence. *Ulcera animi sananda magis quam corporis.* That

flighty philosopher, Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, when Clifford tells him, "You jest pleasantly on your low spirits; but I have a cause for mine,"—retorts, "What then? so much the easier is it to cure them. The mind can cure the evils that spring *from* the mind; it is only a fool, and a quack, and a driveller, when it professes to heal the evils that spring from the body:—*my* blue devils spring from the body; consequently my mind wrestles not against them." The philosophy is about as serious or practical as that of Balzac's medical student, Bianchon, when he asks the cause of Rastignac's depression, and is told, "Je suis tourmenté par de mauvaises idées." "En quel genre? Ça se guérit, les idées." "Comment?" "En y succombant." More to the purpose is the answer of the physician to Cordelia's tearful query in behalf of distraught Lear, "What can man's wisdom do, in the restoring his bereaved sense?"

"There is means, madam:—

Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor.

All bless'd secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant, and remediate,
In the good man's distress!"

In his historical details of the malady of Charles the Sixth of France, in the last decade of the fourteenth century, Michelet tells us the royal patient had no lack of physicians, but little it was they did for him—medicine at that time of day caring for the body without taking thought of the mind, and attempting to cure the physical without investigating the moral evil, "which, however, is commonly the primary cause of the other." Earlier ages, he goes on to say, had acted on quite a contrary system, knowing little of material remedies, but being marvellously skilled to soothe, to "charm" the patient, and prepare him for the working of a cure. "The art of physic was conducted Christianly, and practised at the holy water-vessels of the churches." Frequently the patient was first made to confess himself, and a

knowledge of his life and habits was thus arrived at. In the fourteenth century these preliminary preparations were no longer understood: the body was at once and brutally attacked—put to the torture, indeed. “The king, soon sick of treatment of this kind, in a lucid interval dismissed his physicians.” His courtiers persuaded him to seek his cure in amusements and festivals; to cure madness by folly. And they fooled him to the top of his bent, or their own. Past any such remedy, supposing it even to be one, was James the Fifth of Scotland, after the Solway disaster, when shut up in his palace at Falkland, he would sit for hours in deepest dejection without speaking a word. This could not last; and it was soon discovered, the historians record, that a slow fever preyed upon his frame; and having its seat in the misery of a wounded spirit, no remedy could be effectual.

It is long before Sir Jasper Denison divines it is a mental anguish, and not a physical languor, under the influence of which his daughter droops and grows paler day by day. “The family medical man was sent for, and administered tonics;” but no tonics could reach to the seat of this disorder. Some half-dozen chapters later we find the baronet complaining to this same safe and respectable Mr. Redmond, that his daughter is not at all herself; “and I really do beg that you will make a point of seeing that she becomes herself at the earliest opportunity. She’s as grey and chalky as a third-rate portrait in the Royal Academy. Can’t you warm her up a little with some nice yellows—tonics, I should say?” The surgeon shook his head. “There is a want of tone, Sir Jasper,” he murmured; “an evident want of tone.” And the tonics fell flat in that case. As again with the broken-hearted mother in *The Minister’s Wooing*; in whose illness, we read, the shimmering twilight of the sick-room fell on white napkins, spread over stands, where constantly appeared new phials, big and little, as the physician made his daily visit, and prescribed now this drug and now that, for a wound that had struck through the soul. The despairing girl in the *Gordian Knot*

describes her despair to her kindly doctor, and asks, "Do you know anything about that, or do they put it in the doctors' books?" Philaster's outcry of invective is against

"Nature, too unkind,
That made no medicine for a troubled mind."

King Saul, in a Canadian drama praised by cisatlantic reviewers, demands of his physician a tonic for the heart, and as that official cannot gratify him, he goes on to declare,

"The mind, the mind's the only worthy patient !
Were I one of thy craft, ere this I'd have
Anatomized a spirit ; I'd have treated
Soul wounds of my own making . . .
 Ye are impostors !
All said, ye are impostors—fleas ! Skin deep
Is deep with you : you only prick the flesh
When you should probe the overwhelmed heart
And lance the horny wounds of old despair."

§ IV.

THE APOTHECARY OF MANTUA.

Romeo and Juliet, Act v., Sc 1.

BENT on buying poison for himself, Romeo is at no loss for likely means of procuring it. What though he be in Mantua, and that Mantua's law is death to any vendor of mortal drugs? Romeo can call to mind a certain needy apothecary, upon whose need he can rely for gaining his own purpose. The miserable look of the meagre wretch had fixed the pitying gaze of the stranger; and that look was entirely in keeping with the bare and forlorn aspect of his shop. Romeo had marked the man in the act of culling simples; he had been moved by the sight of such tattered attire, and such "overwhelming brows."

More than half-starved that apothecary looked ; sharp misery had worn him to the bones :

“ And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,*
 An alligator stuff'd, and other skins
 Of ill-shaped fishes ; and about his shelves
 A beggarly account of empty boxes,
 Green earthen pots, bladders, and musty seeds,
 Remnants of packthread, and old cakes of roses,
 Were thinly scatter'd, to make up a show.”

* Joseph Warton calls this passage a glaring instance of the absurdity of introducing long and minute descriptions into tragedy ; and he appeals to those who know anything of the human heart, whether Romeo, in his distressful situation, could have leisure to think of the alligator, empty boxes, and bladders, and other furniture, of this beggarly shop, and to point them out so distinctly to the audience. The description itself, Warton owns to be very lively and natural ; but he complains of it as being very improperly put into the mouth of a person agitated with such passion as Romeo is represented to be.

No leisure to think of the shop fittings ? answers the critic's critics : what then had Romeo leisure to do ? Had he leisure, Charles Knight asks, to run off into declamations against fate, and into tedious apostrophes and generalizations, such as a less skilful artist than Shakspeare would have made him indulge in ? From the moment of his resolve to die with Juliet, the apothecary's shop became to Romeo an object of the keenest interest. “ Great passions, when they have shaped themselves into fine resolves, attach the most distinct importance to the minutest objects connected with the execution of their purpose.” And now that Romeo needed a poison, the apothecary's shop that he had eyed in his placid moments as an object of common curiosity, occurred with a double intensity to his vision ; nor was the shaping of the details into words a thing for the audience : it was the very cunning of nature that produced this description. “ Mischief was, indeed, swift to enter into the thoughts of the desperate man : but, the mind once made up, it took a perverse pleasure in going over every item of the circumstances that had suggested the means of mischief.” Nothing being left for Romeo but to die, all other thoughts had passed out of his mind ; and everything connected with the means of his death was seized upon by his imagination with an energy that could only find relief in words. It is criticism of a higher school than Dr. Warton's, which affirms it to have been the intense interest in his own resolve which made Romeo so minutely describe his apothecary.

Speaking topographically, Mr. Dickens incidentally remarked in his *Pictures from Italy*, that if ever a man was suited to his place of resi-

Altogether, an apothecary to look at, and to buy poison of. So Romeo thought ; nor was he mistaken in his judgment. Noting this penury, to himself he said, " An if a man did need a poison now, whose sale is present death in Mantua, here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him." And this same thought of the Veronese outlaw's did but forerun his need ; and this same needy man must sell it him—here and now.

So Romeo summons the starveling, and states his case. He holds out forty ducats to the poverty-stricken practitioner, and requires in return a dram of poison only ; but of poison such as will do its work perfectly and speedily ; such stuff as will disperse itself through all the veins, that the life-weary taker may fall dead. Demurs the listener, deterred by dread of the law ?

" Art thou so base, and full of wretchedness,
And fear'st to die ? famine is in thy cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,
Upon thy back hangs ragged misery,
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law :
The world affords no law to make thee rich ;
Then be not poor, but break it, and take this."

His poverty, but not his will, consents. And Romeo pays his poverty, and not his will. " Farewell ; buy food, and get thyself in flesh," is the parting salutation of the purchaser to the meagre druggist.

Quod ut facerem, egestas me impulit, might the vendor say with Sophrona in Terence. He could not have gone on to say with Phormio in a later scene,

" Heus ! quanta quanta hæc mea paupertas est, tamen
Adhuc curavi unum hoc quidem, ut mi esset fides."

But what would you have of one who might be described as Doctor Pinch is described in another play of Shakespeare's, as a hungry, lean-faced villain, a mere anatomy, " a needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch, a living dead man." Such another in point of looks is the miserly

denée, and his place of residence to him, the lean Apothecary and Mantua came together in a perfect fitness of things.

schoolmaster in Quevedo, whose house was the abode of Famine, who himself was a skeleton, a mere shotten herring, or like a long slender cane with a little head upon it ; whose eyes were sunk into his head, and whose beard had lost its colour for fear of his mouth, which, being so near, seemed to threaten to eat it for sheer hunger. "His neck was as long as a crane's, with the gullet sticking out so far as if it had been compelled by necessity to start out for sustenance." As he walked, his bones "rattled like a pair of snappers." And as for the room he occupied, there was not a cobweb in it—the spiders being all starved to death. More tragical is the style of the caitiff in Barry Cornwall, so famished, and in such frightful beggary, as to quarrel with the houseless cur "for scraps the stomach sickens at ;" one from whose bones "the lean and traitorous flesh had fled, and left a desperate skeleton." Dr. Burney declared it to be difficult to conceive the possibility of life subsisting in a form so nearly composed of mere skin and bone as that of M. de Voltaire, seen by him at Ferney in 1776 ; and the patriarch supposed his visitor was "anxious to form an idea of the figure of one walking after death." The shrunk and shrivelled Mr. Pentweazle of fiction is pictured as looking more like those preparations which one sees in Surgeons' Hall, carefully preserved in bottles of spirits, than anything with life in it. We are reminded too of a "scarecrow of rags and bones" of Charles Kingsley's painting ; and again of the Job Trotter of Dickens, that "careworn looking man" with such deeply sunken eyes and such long lank jaws, and clad in apparel so seedy and scanty ; and of poor starved Smike, who, as Mr. Crummles admiringly criticized him, would without any make-up for the part be such a representative of the Apothecary in *Romeo and Juliet* as had never been seen before in the country.* Add from Scott the "poor Pottingar" of Perth,

* The reader may remember that the manager engages Smike accordingly for that very part, and how unable the starveling was to get any

Henbane Dwining, that "thin meagre figure of a man, whose diminutive person seemed assimilated to a shadow"—and whom the Gow Chrom threatens to pound in his own mortar, and to beat up his wretched carrion with flower of brimstone, the only real medicine in his booth. "Thou walking skeleton! thou asthmatic gallipot! thou poisoner by profession!"—such are the armourer's terms of greeting to the "potticary." And with him may pair off in point of physique the scrivener in *Nigel*—that "starved anatomy" and cream-faced loon, who in rascality came not very far short of Henbane Dwining. Mr. Charles Reade gives us a "singularly gaunt, angular, and haggard" personage, who, being, dressed in a spruce suit of glossy black, "looked like Romeo's apothecary gone to Stultz with the money." Judge Haliburton gives us a "chap as thin as a whippin' post," putting one in mind of a pair of kitchen tongs, all legs, shaft, and head, and no belly; "a real gander-gutted lookin critter, as holler as a bamboo walkin cane, and twice as yaller. He actilly looked as if he had been picked off a rock at sea, and dragged through a gimlet hole." Richardson's lean apothecary in *Clarissa* is professedly a resemblance of Otway's in *Caius Marius*, "as borrowed from the immortal Shakspeare," for meagre and very rueful were his looks, and misery had worn him to the bones. Of like parentage is the apothecary Lampedo in Tobin's *Honeymoon*, whom Balthazar rates as

"thou sketch and outline of a man!
Thou thing that hast no shadow in the sun!
Thou eel in a consumption, eldest born

more of the part into his head than the general idea that he was very hungry, which—perhaps from old recollections of Dotheboys Hall—he had acquired with great aptitude.

In another story Mr. Dickens makes a plump doctor stigmatize *Romeo and Juliet* as a play which does anything but justice to "our profession." "There is an apothecary in that drama, sir, which is a low thing; vulgar, sir; out of nature altogether." Saying which, Mr. Jobling pulled out his shirt full of fine linen, as if to indicate what he *did* call nature in a medical man, sir.

Of Death and Famine ! thou anatomy
Of a starved pilchard !"

Or we might recall Virgil's image—*macie confecta supremâ*
... *forma viri, miserandaque cultu.*

A separate section might be made up of illustrations of the apothecary's plea, that to the sale of poison his poverty and not his will consented. Twice in the Brussels legend of the desecrated Host in the synagogue, are the words used by our Christian historian of the Jews,—applied first to John of Louvain, "whose poverty could not resist the bribe of sixty golden coins" for stealing the pix, with its sacred contents, from the Chapel of St. Catharine ; and again to the woman selected by the Jews to convey their treasure to Cologne, whose "poverty but not her will consented." It is virtually, if not verbally, the plea of Milton's "subtle fiend" himself, where he speaks of being urged hard

"with doings, which not will
But misery hath wrested from me."

A quasi-apologist for Marat—that sometime practising apothecary or starved surgeon, who exchanged retail practice for wholesale, and the lancet for the guillotine—has pronounced him to be such a man as the apothecary of Mantua would have become in a revolution ; only Marat, instead of dealing out small doses of death to lovesick tailors and world-wearied seamstresses, cried out for eighty thousand heads. "Let us pity this poor vial of prussic acid," urges the special pleader, on the ground that Shakespeare had a decided *penchant* for the caitiff wretch *he* so graphically paints, and whose shop he has advertised to the ends of the earth.

Things are nearing the bitter end with Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*, when Sydney Carton stops in the middle of a Paris street by night, under a glimmering lamp, and writes with his pencil on a scrap of paper. Then traversing, with the decided step of one who remembers the way well, several dark and dirty thoroughfares, he stops at a chemist's shop which the owner is closing with his own hands : a small, dim, crooked shop, kept in a squalid quarter by a small

dim, crooked man. Confronting him at his counter, Carton lays the scrap of paper before him. "'Whew!' the chemist whistled softly, as he read it. 'Hi! hi! hi!' Sydney Carton took no heed, and the chemist said, 'For you, citizen?' 'For me.'" And the black business is done accordingly. Paris is not Mantua, nor is Sydney Carton a Romeo; but there is a Juliet in this case too—and an apothecary.

The Doctor Leech of a ballad of the Ingoldsby school, but without the clear ring of Barham metal in either rhyme or reason, is a shadow of the shade in Shakspeare of the apothecary that Romeo drew, and bribed. As for said doctor's shop-window, "three globes of colour'd liquor graced its panes," and within it "shone drawers and jars, each with its classic label ;

"But, as the drawers were shut, and jars opaque,
No passenger or customer was able
Whether they full or empty were to tell,
Though Doctor Leech the latter knew full well.

These, with some bullocks' bladders,
And half a dozen adders
Preserved in spirits,
Beyond their merits,
With empty phials, a prodigious host,
Were all our pharmacopolist could boast.

* * * * *

"His fees scarce furnish'd the coarse meals he swallow'd,
Or suffer'd him to clothe his bony haunches
In decent breeches. . . . Meanest slave or poorest bard
Could scarcely hold his life on terms so hard.
Sometimes he lived on porridge make of leeks
For weeks : or toasted cheese, or boil'd grey pease.
Nay, in extremity, he sometimes fed
For many a cheerless day on barley bread."

So again in one of Mr. Fitzgerald's fictions we have a glimpse of a dingy apothecary's shop, languid as regards business; its bottles, medicines, and apparatus showing under a delicate film of blue mould; while the dispenser himself, as seen through a dusty pane, seemed to be suffering under the same powdery mite-eaten blight. Geoffrey

Crayon's explorations in Little Britain made us acquainted with a "tall, dry old gentleman, of the name of Skryme," who kept a small apothecary's shop; a man of cadaverous countenance, full of cavities and projections; of considerable repute among old women, who deem him a kind of conjuror, because he has two or three stuffed alligators hanging over his counter, and several snakes in bottles on his shelves. But the same essay-writer's better-known Ichabod Crane, of Sleepy Hollow, in the Legend of that ilk, is a more graphic personal representative of Romeo's apothecary, as regards his lank proportions; to see whom striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes (too big for his shrunk shank and wasted waist) bagging and fluttering about him, was like seeing the genius of famine descending upon the earth, or some marrowless scarecrow eloped from a corn-field.

§ V.

A DEADLY DOCTOR.

King Richard II., Act i., Sc. 4.

THE tidings that his uncle, old John of Gaunt, is grievous sick, suddenly taken, and hath sent post-haste, to entreat his royal nephew to visit him at Ely House,—how does King Richard meet the message, and greet its import? With a heartless wish that Uncle John's doctor may be a deadly one, not a healing one; may play into the hands of death, not rescue the aged Duke out of those hands. John of Gaunt's wealth will be useful to Richard the Second. The lining of his coffers will make coats to deck the soldiers for the Irish wars. Besides, the King likes not the didactic tone, the remonstrant tendencies, of his venerable kinsman, and could well spare the counsellor, to be spared

the counsel. He will comply with the summons, and at once ; but he prays God that, making haste, he may come too late. And meanwhile there is this other prayerful profanity to utter, devout in its malign aspirations :

“ Now put it, Heaven, in his physician's mind,
To help him to his grave immediately.”

Kings have had such doctors at command, ere now ; and the physician that poisons his patient, though a monster, is not one of incredible proportions. “ Would the cook were of my mind ! ” wishes wicked Don John of Arragon, in view of the forthcoming feast at which kinsfolk and friends of his are to assist. For cooks and physicians are exceptionally qualified, professionally, for dark work of this deadly sort ; and both classes have had members amenable to inducements thus to betray their trust, and abuse their office. Was it of malice prepense that the physician of Dionysius the elder, when fevered after a debauch, and asking for a sleeping draught, gave him one from which he never woke again ? Philippus is the honoured name of the good physician of Alexander, whom Parmenio alleged to have been bribed by Darius to poison him, and whom Alexander so little mistrusted that he gave him the accusing letter to read while himself drinking off the draught that Philippus had prepared for him—the effect of which justified that magnanimous trust. Philippus was a common name among the physicians of old—but this one, of Acarnania, is remembered above the rest. Parmenio's charge against him, however, was not, on the face of it, preposterous, as physicians and physic were accounted of in those days. Nicias is the name by which we know that very different doctor (for, how doctors differ !) who went to Fabricius, the Roman consul, and offered, for a consideration, to take off his royal master by poison—that master and patron being Pyrrhus, King of Epirus. The consul indignantly scouted the offer, and denounced the traitor, who came incontinently to a bad end, but was utilized for a good one, in so far as his skin was appropriated to

cover the seat of a chair. Was it an easy one? Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown; and uneasy might well be the seat of a king with such surroundings.

Dion affirms for certain that Marcus Aurelius, though sick, was actually cut off by poison, administered by the physicians in his son's interest. Dean Merivale distrusts Dion. Libanius composed what Gibbon calls a "very weak apology" to defend his hero, the Emperor Julian, from "a very absurd charge" of poisoning his wife, and rewarding her physician with his mother's jewels. Eudemus is a typical figure in the *Sejanus* of Ben Jonson, a physician worthy of a province for his accommodating practices—for the potions he exhibits and the sleeping draughts (without a waking) he administers,—Jonson, as usual, working assiduously in the track of Tacitus, for this as for other particulars of his minutely historical tragedies of imperial Rome.

Charles the Bald's physician being a Jew, it was generally believed that the brevity of that imperial but inglorious reign was due to poison; in the ninth century, the Jews, educated in the Arabian universities of Spain, were no doubt, as Milman says, more advanced in medical science than any others in Europe. The great emperor, Frederick II., is said, on one occasion, to have tested (unlike Alexander) the worth of a warning letter, by sternly commanding the physician to drink half of the cup presented to him. The culprit threw himself at the emperor's feet, and, as he fell, overturned the liquor—enough of which was left, however, to be administered to some criminals; and they died in agony.*

* History repeats itself. In Raikes's Diary for the year 1837 may be read how a scheme was then started by the chief physician of the Grand Signior at Constantinople to poison his master. The Sultan, having timely notice of the plot, pretended illness, and sent for his medical adviser to the palace, who prescribed a potion, and presented it with his own hand. The Sultan then ordered him to swallow the draught himself, which he positively declined doing. The sequel is that he "got the sack"—not in the slang English sense, but as they manage matters on the Bosphorus,—carefully sewing up the full sack first.

Coictier, physician to Lewis the Eleventh, has the credit of ridding his master of our Edward the Fourth, by duly doctoring the wine presented by the French to the English monarch. When Pope Adrian the Sixth departed this life, the Romans crowned his physician with laurel, as the saviour of his country. So again (but with gold for laurel) in the instance of Clement the Seventh, for whom Curtius had fatally prescribed :

“Curtius occidit Clementem : Curtius auro
Donandus, per quem publica parata salus.”

Henry of Navarre's chief physician, De La Riviere, was for some time mainly occupied in devising antidotes to poison, which he well knew was offered to his master on various occasions, and in the most insidious ways. About the same time occurred the elaborate attempt of the Portuguese Jew, Dr. Lopez, on the life of Queen Elizabeth, whose physician-in-ordinary he had got to be appointed—all in the interests of Philip of Spain. The Earl of Leicester's Italian physician, Julio, was affirmed by his contemporaries to be a skilful compounder of poisons, which he applied with such frequency, that the Jesuit Parsons extols ironically the marvellous good luck of the Queen's great favourite in the opportune deaths of those who stood in the way of his wishes.

Dr. Rimbault, in his memoir of Sir Thomas Overbury, tells us of Dr. Mayerne, who had been physician to Henry the Fourth of France, and was “well experienced in the secret state poisonings of the French capital,” that he was invited over to England by James the First in order to be his own physician, and with this result, if not this object, that he became the prime mover in the secret state poisonings of the English capital.

It used to be a matter of course, when a great man died, to accuse his physicians of killing him ; or to glorify them for it, as the case might be. Thus at the death of Henrietta, daughter of Henry IV. of France, and wife of our Charles I., some one wrote on her physician, Valot, what is thus Englished by Mr. Besant—

"A cruel fate, the same for each,
 Three of a royal race befel ;
 What killed the husband and the sire,
 The wife and daughter slew as well.
 Each died by an assassin's blow ;
 Ravailiac, Cromwell, and Valot.
 Henry by stroke of traitor's knife,
 Charles on the scaffold lost his head ;
 And now the daughter and the wife,
 Slain by her doctor, here lies dead."

And after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, over whom the doctors wrangled, not being able to make up their minds as to his disease, the people would make way for Doctor Guénant in the streets, crying, "Let him pass—let him pass! He is the doctor who killed the cardinal for us." As popular, this practitioner, as that Florentine celebrated in Boileau was the reverse :

"Dans Florence jadis vivait un médecin,
 Savant hâbleur, dit-on, et célèbre assassin.
 Lui seul y fit long-temps la publique misère :
 Là le fils orphelin lui redemande un père ;
 Ici le frère pleure un frère empoisonné :
 L'un meurt vide de sang, l'autre plein de séné :
 Le rhume à son aspect se change en pleurésie,
 Et par lui la migraine est bientôt frénésie.
 Il quitte enfin la ville, en tous lieux détesté."

One main point in the allegations of Titus Oates was that Sir George Wakeman, the Queen's physician, had engaged to poison Charles the Second, the Queen herself being privy to the scheme. From the Popish Plot to pure fiction the transit is smooth and short ; and we might fill a few pages with references accordingly to such notorieties as the Doctor Rappaccini of Hawthorne, whose patients were interesting to him only as subjects for some new experiment, and who was said to have produced new varieties of poison, more horribly deleterious than Nature, without the assistance of this learned person, would ever have plagued the world with ; or as Scott's Alasco, who is poisoner, quacksalver, alchemist, and astrologer, all in one ; or again his Henbane Dwining, in the *Fair Maid of Perth*,

in whom, slight wasted anatomy though he be, Harry the Smith discerns more danger than in twenty tall men-at-arms, and who undertakes without demur the desired riddance of the heir-apparent of Scotland's crown. The Pottingar might have sat for the original of Dunbar's invective—

“In pottingry he wrocht great pyne ;
He murdreit mony in medecyne.”

But of fiction there may already have been more than enough, in this chapter of instances commonly accepted as matters of fact.

Recorded of other physicians besides Desgenettes is the answer made by him to Napoleon at Jaffa, when asked if it would be an act of humanity to administer opium to the invalid obstructives there: “My business is to cure, and not to kill.” The Turks are not, by all accounts, the “best good Christians” in matters of this sort. Dr. Oppenheim's work* on the state of medicine in Turkey throws a sickly light on the doings of deadly doctors, when their dispensing power is in request, in the way of ministrations to death; and the author himself, whose practice lay among the better classes of Turks, had, it seems, to make a hurried departure at last, since a great man, whose enemy was under treatment, proposed that the doctor should dispense poison, and when the proposal was declined, proceeded to try his own skill by attempting to poison the doctor. Mr. Nassau Senior's *Journal in Turkey* offers corroborative evidence, another European physician being his authority, who had declined applications of a similar kind, without however the same sequel of having to run for his life. Such applicants would seem to take literally Gulliver's report of the ways and means of British physicians in his time, and their cheap rating of life, as viewed professionally: they seldom fail in their prognostics, Captain Lemuel assured his Houyhnhnm master,—their predictions in real diseases, when at all malignant, generally portending

* In German; but some edifying excerpts from it may be seen in the late Dr. Graves's *Studies in Physiology*.

death, "which is always in their power, when recovery is not; and therefore, upon any unexpected signs of amendment, after they have pronounced their sentence, rather than be accused as false prophets, they know how to approve their sagacity to the world, by a seasonable dose." A horse laugh from the four-footed listener would here perhaps have been appropriate; but of course the Houyhnhnm was too well-bred and too *inhumanly* humane for that.

Montesquieu's Persian Letter-writer classes together, at Venice, the two professions of physician and confessor,* and goes on to say: "On dit que les héritiers s'accommodent mieux des médecins que des confesseurs." It was a true bill of indictment, by Burns, against at least one of Doctor Hornbook's patients—no, patrons:

" A countra laird had ta'en the bats,
Or some curmurrin in his guts,
His only son for Hornbook sets,
 An' pays him well.
The lad, for twa guid gimmer pets,
 Was laird himsel."

For a couple of ewes, in their second year, were this doctor's services at the son's absolute disposal, and one deadly dose was enough.

* The general reader may call to mind how physician and confessor figure together, for evil purpose, in *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, under the auspices of aspiring Aramis.

For other reminders of deadly doctoring in fiction we may refer, in passing, to Zeluco's studied non-interference between physician and patient; to the leech of Folkestone in one of the (prose) Ingoldsby Legends; to the significant "Je ne dis pas qu'il aida la nature et le douleur" with which Fr. Soulié connects "On fit appeler le médecin pensionné," in the case, so soon to terminate fatally, of Madame Destramès; to—but no; space is wanting; and we must abruptly come, like her, to a bad end.

§ VI.

DYING OF AN UNTOLD DISEASE.

Hamlet, Act iv., Sc. i.

CLAUDIUS compares his affected tolerance of Hamlet's mad goings on—his over-indulgence of those dangerous whims and fatal vagaries, which ought to have been checked at once, and once for all—to the mistaken pride or modesty of the sufferer from some mortal malady, which is thus allowed to run its course, undiscovered, to the bitter end. Himself the king charges, on the score of a too tender reserve and reticence, with letting the mischief gather to a head. He has not taken the proper steps in time,

“ But, like the owner of a foul disease,
To keep it from divulging, let it feed
Even on the pith of life.”

Occultare morbum funestum. We may apply alike what Ovid says on the expediency of resisting first advances, a cure being attempted too late when through lingering hesitancy the malady has waxed strong,

“ Principiis obsta ; sero medicina paratur
Cum mala per longas convaluere moras ;”

and what Horace says of the false shame of the foolish that makes them conceal their uncured, but otherwise not incurable, wounds : “*Stultorum incurata malus pudor ulcera celat.*” It is, in fact, historically speaking, a truism that Fitzharding enunciates in *The Curfew*, where he alleges

“ there be patients
Who, by a scant disclosure of their ills,
(Either from foolish modesty or pride,)
Mock the physician's labour.”

Though by many the death of the Emperor Henry VII. so soon after receiving the eucharist from the hands of a Dominican monk, is ascribed to poison—and the particular poison named too, the juice of Napel—by others he is said

to have been already attacked by a malady which he concealed.*

Mary of Burgundy, dying within a few days of her fall from horseback, is said to have preferred death to the assumed indignity of examination by her medical attendants; the daughter, like the father, as Michelet puts it, perishing through a point of honour.

Anne of Austria seems rather to have tried to conceal, than to have succeeded in doing so, the acute suffering which was one day to have a fatal issue. More successful was Queen Caroline, consort of our George II., whom "false delicacy" induced to conceal from her attendants the malady which killed her. Her real disease being undivulged even to her physicians, they treated her complaint as gout in the stomach, and prescribed remedies which aggravated the evil (rupture). When it was at length discovered, the malady was already beyond their skill; though one of the surgeons declared that, had he known it two days sooner, Her Majesty should have been walking about the next day. We may apply Horace again, with a wrench or twist of his meaning however:

"Neu, si te populus sanum recteque valentem
Dicitet, occultam febrem
Dissimules, donec manibus tremor incidat,"

and all through the *pudor malus*, the false shame, stigmatized in the line previously quoted. The hard, proud side of this *pudor* is notably instanced in perhaps the most effective character-portrait ever drawn by Mrs. Gore,—the Mrs. Armytage, namely, of *Female Domination*, into the surmises of whose nearest friends it never entered that she was labouring under an agonizing and fatal disease. Tortured by pain, she was tortured still worse by the efforts necessary to repress its expression. To be above pain was thought manly by the Stoics, who did not see, observes Mr. Lewes, that, in this respect, instead of being above Humanity, they sank miserably

* A carbuncle had manifested itself below the knee; and a cold bath, which he took to calm the burning irritation, perhaps occasioned, suggests Sismondi, the Kaiser's sudden and unexpected death.

below it ; for if it is a condition of our human organization to be susceptible of pain, it is only affectation to conceal the "expression" of that pain. "Could silence stifle pain, it were well ; but to stifle the cry, is not to stifle the feeling ; and to have a feeling, yet affect not to have it, is pitiful. The savage soon learns that philosophy ; but the civilized man is above it. You receive a blow, and you do not wince ? So much of heroism is displayed by a stone." And stone enters largely into the composition of such a character as the one thus characterized in Leigh Hunt's *Feast of the Violets*—

"And poor Mrs. Armytage, warning exaction,
Sits arm-chair'd for ever, a dread petrification."

We are reminded of *une femme mourante, et qui cherche à mourir*, the Phèdre of Racine :

"Phèdre atteinte d'un mal qu'elle s'obstine à taire,
Lasse enfin d'elle-même et du jour qui l'éclaire,"—

and of whom her closest confidante has this to allege, that "elle meurt dans mes bras d'un mal qu'elle me cache." Resolute the queen seemed to die and make no sign.

In his account of the last illness and the death of his endeared friend, Froben the printer, who throughout his long life had never been laid up with sickness, Erasmus describes a serious fall he had had, six years previously, from the top of the stairs on a tiled floor,—the effects of which accident he was studious to conceal ; for Froben "was a man of such a high spirit that he was ashamed to let it be seen that he was in pain." Towards the last, two of the fingers of his right hand became paralysed, "showing that death was not far off ; but this also he concealed, thinking it unmanly in any respect to give way to disease." There may not have been much of the antique Roman in Gibbon's composition—meaning his personal or physical composition, not his composition of the *Decline and Fall*, for there is plenty of antique Rome in that—but by Lord Sheffield's account he was fatally reticent in regard of the disease which carried him off. "I did not understand," writes his noble friend, "why he, who had talked with me on every other subject relative to himself

and his affairs without reserve, should never in any shape hint at a malady so troublesome; but on speaking to his valet de chambre, he told me, Mr. Gibbon could not bear the least allusion to that subject, and never would suffer him to notice it." "Although the disorder continued to increase gradually, and of late years very much indeed, he never mentioned it to any person, however incredible it may appear, from 1761 to November 1793," when in effect it was too late. Yet was Edward Gibbon just the man to have appreciated to the full the spirit of Boileau's strain :

" Misérables jouets de notre vanité,
Faisons au moins l'aveu de notre infirmité.
A quoi bon, quand la fièvre dans nos artères brûle,
Faire de notre mal un secret ridicule ?
* * * * *
Quelle fausse pudeur à feindre vous oblige ?
Qu'avez-vous ? Je n'ai rien. Mais . . . je n'ai rien, vous
dis-je,
Repondra ce malade à se taire obstiné.
Mais cependant voilà tout son corps gangrené."

CHAPTER V.

Friar Laurence.

G ERVINUS represents Friar Laurence as a kind of chorus expressing Shakspeare's own ethical ideas, and his opinions respecting the characters and action of his play. The answer to this notion is valid, that it is not Shakspeare's practice to expound the moralities of his artistic creations ; nor does he ever by means of a chorus stand above and outside the men and women of his plays, who are bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. "No ! Friar Laurence also is moving in the cloud, and misled by error as well as the rest." Professor Dowden forcibly contends that Shakspeare has never made the moderate, self-possessed, sedate person a final or absolute judge of the impulsive and the passionate ; the one sees a side of truth which is unseen by the other ; but to neither is the whole truth visible. The Friar, we are reminded, had supposed that by virtue of his prudence, his moderation, his sage counsels, his amiable sophistries, he could guide these two young, passionate lives, and do away with the old traditions of enmity between the houses ; and there in the tomb of the Capulets is the return brought in by his investment of kindly scheming. "Shakspeare did not believe that the highest wisdom of human life was acquirable by mild, monastic meditation, and by gathering of simples in the coolness of the dawn. Friar Laurence, too, old man, had his lesson to learn."

As Gervinus among the Germans, so Philarète Chasles, of the modern French school, regards the Friar as Shakspeare's own mouthpiece. *Le vieil ermite* is cited as a personage "dont le seul emploi est de philosopher," and whose

voice, *c'est la voix de Shakspeare*, "qui après avoir analysé curieusement les âmes humaines, l'inanité de nos désirs et le terrible fin de nos passions consumées par leur intensité, pousse un long et sublime gémissement."* In another of his books the French critic refers to the presence in the original story, of a mere complaisant priest, conveniently accommodating, who admits at one side of his confessional the lover, at the other his mistress, and who bestows his facile benediction on their interviews. Arthur Brooke made of this monk a facetious personage, a sort of jolly good fellow with a monomania for marriage-making. And what is he become in Shakspeare, as M. Chasles depicts him? An aged philosopher, whose wonder it is that the beatings of a youthful heart can stifle reason and prudence; one whose white beard, mild visage, venerable air, and healthy lofty moral tone, accord well with his physical surroundings.†

* Etudes sur le drame Espagnol, § iv.

† Culling herbs, and moralizing on their several virtues,—it is pleasantly picturesque, the figure he presents in this pursuit. Foot-notes might run to seed in variegated illustration of this basketing of simples, —after the manner of Friar Laurence with his "osier cage," to be filled at daybreak with medicinal flowers.

The Attendant Spirit in *Comus* brings to mind a certain shepherd lad, of small regard to see to, yet well skilled in every virtuous plant and healing herb that spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray; and this observant collector would "ope his leathern scrip, And show me simples of a thousand names, Telling their strange and vigorous faculties." A century earlier had Thomas Tusser sung the praises of the "good huswife" who cultivates

"Cold herbs in her garden, for agues that burn,
That over-strong heat to good temper may turn," etc.

In Spenser's third book we see the aged nurse cull rue, and savine, and the flower of camphora, and calamint, and dill,—with as precise a knowledge of their virtues as Southey's Iolo could boast—

"Iolo, old Iolo, he who knows
The virtue of all herbs of mount or vale,
Or greenwood shade, or quiet brooklet's bed."

Latter-day critics of the "simples" by which George Herbert set so much store in his *Country Parson*, and the lore of which Gerarde details with such faith in his *Herbal*, affirm most of them to be wholly or comparatively harmless, nay, perhaps even efficacious, if faith attend the using of

Calm he is, for he lives with God. He neither derides human passions, nor overmuch blames them,—he is man of the world enough for that. “How prudent and how courageous he proves himself! How sensible he is that to irritate by opposition the longings and emotions of his *protégés* is to augment their danger! What admirable sympathy he shows with Romeo and with Juliet! “*Leur sympathie naïve est à ses yeux un fragment sacré de la grande religion universelle.*” The father confessor is glad to be the fatherly confidant. In him the Montagues and the Capulets can alike confide, and to his counsel confidently resort. It is a happy function, that of playing the friendly arbiter and family referee: such as that “venerable Priest,” described from the life by Scott,—

“Whose eye in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had been;

them. But the faith and practice are made over mostly, nowadays, to “old women,” of dubious gender. In the case of his Father Clement, as a sort of Laurentian amateur, Mr. Charles Reade shrewdly surmises that he killed nobody, for his remedies were “womanish and weak”—sage, and wormwood, hyssop, borage, spikenard, dog’s-tongue, our Lady’s mantle, feverfew, and Faith—and all in small quantities except the last. Sir Walter assigns a saving efficacy to the vulnerary plants and salves employed by Norna of the Fitful Head. His Highland Widow too was skilful in the use of herbs, with which, knowing how to select as well as how to distil them, “she could relieve more diseases than a regular medical person could readily believe.” And in *Waverley*, again, there is an old Highlander equally expert in the collection and concoction of simples,—to whom the hero is indebted accordingly, after his accident in the stag-hunt. Mrs. Gaskell’s old Alice Wilson spends a whole day at a time in the fields, gathering wild herbs for drinks and medicine. George Eliot’s Silas Marner, the weaver of Raveloe, had inherited from his mother some acquaintance with medicinal herbs and their preparation, and with it a delight in roaming the fields in quest of foxglove and dandelion and coltsfoot. Hawthorne’s Roger Chillingworth in his Indian captivity had gained much knowledge of the properties of native herbs and roots; nor did he conceal from his patients, that these simple medicines, Nature’s boon to the untutored savage, had quite as large a share of his own confidence as the European Pharmacopœia, which so many learned doctors had spent centuries in elaborating. Though there can be little doubt that a considerable amount of poisoning was mixed up with the witch

Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought."

Every one, according to Mr. Trollope, has some quiet, old, family, confidential friend; a man given to silence, but of undoubted knowledge of the world, whose experience is vast, and who, though he has not risen in the world himself, is always the man to help others to do so. Sometimes one man, and none the less if he *has* risen in the world, plays this part of guide, philosopher, and friend to numerous clients, and is in large request as umpire, arbiter, and judicious if not judicial referee. He then approximates to the position of a Bishop Sanderson, whose "poor but contented privacy of life, his casuistical learning, peaceful moderation, and sincerity," as Izaak Walton words it, attracted so many applicants for counsel and consolation,

cases of old, it is, on the other hand, says Mr. Lecky, equally certain that the witches constantly employed their knowledge of the property of herbs for the purpose of curing disease, and that they attained, in this respect, a skill which was hardly equalled by the regular practitioners. They had Friar Laurence's acquaintance

"With baleful weeds, and precious-juiced flowers . . .
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different."

Chiron, in the second part of Goethe's *Faust*, professes to have long since resigned his leech-craft "to simple-culling beldames and to friars;"—and Fuller observes that, "in all times, in the opinion of the multitude, witches, old women, and impostors have had a competition with physicians." Holy George Herbert accounted the Parson's Completeness incomplete unless a knowledge of simples were mastered and put to use—"to know what herbes may be used instead of drugs of the same nature, and to make the garden the shop. . . . For salves, his wife seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely nyssope, valerian, mercury, adder's tongue, yarrow, melilot, and Saint John's wort, made into a salve; and elder, camomile, mallows, comphrey, and smallage, made into a poultice, have done great and rare cures." It is the honest boast of Cooper's old Leatherstocking, to the prejudice of a more regular practitioner,—“I have yarbs that will heal the wound quicker than all his foreign 'intments.” One glance will suffice at the Costanza of Mrs. Hemans :

"'Midst leaves and flowers
She dwelt, and knew all secrets of their powers,
All nature's balms, wherewith her gliding tread

for direction and instruction in righteousness—the way to go right, or to get back into the right path again. George Eliot submits that the middle-aged, who have lived through their strongest emotions, but are yet in the time when memory is still half-passionate, and not merely contemplative, should surely be a sort of natural priesthood, whom life has disciplined and consecrated to be the refuge and rescue of early stumblers and victims of self-despair. “Most of us, at some period in our young lives, would have welcomed a priest of that natural order in any sort of canonicals or uncanonicals.”* Such an uncanonical priest Mr. Disraeli’s Armine family have in Adrian Glastonbury, whose patience, and vigilant care, and ever-ready sympathy are to them of such inestimable service. Loved as a father, he exercises over disquieted youth an almost

To the sick peasant on his lowly bed
Came and brought hope.”

Half a glance will be enough at a reverend figure in a dramatic fragment of Coleridge’s,—enough at least to recall our Laurentian type :

“A Friar, who gathered simples in the wood,
A gray-haired man,”

who took as much interest in the fortunes of a young favourite, as did Shakspeare’s Franciscan in those of the Veronese lovers.

Taking Friar Laurence for the representative of a class, Charles Knight, in his rather too conjectural biography of Shakspeare, reminds us that the Infirmarist of a monastic house, who had charge of the sick brethren, was often in the early days of medical science their sole physician ; and as the book-knowledge and the experience of such a valuable member of a conventual body would still allow him to exercise useful functions when thrust into the world, it is suggested that the young Shakspeare may have known some kindly old man, full of axiomatic wisdom, and sufficiently confident in his own management, like the well-meaning Friar Laurence.

* Maggie Tulliver is described as having, “like most of us,” had to scramble upwards into all the difficulties of nineteen, without such aid. But, later in her history, Maggie has her Dr. Kenn to turn to ; and to him, as Juliet to the Friar, she resorts accordingly, with a look of childlike directness, saying, “I want to tell you everything.” “Do tell me everything,” Dr. Kenn said, with quiet kindness in his grave firm voice : “Think of me as one to whom a long experience has been granted, which may enable him to help you.”—*The Mill on the Floss*, Book vi., chap. ix. ; and Book vii., chap. ii.

irresistible influence. There is something more to remind us of Friar Laurence in what we read of his becoming the depository of painful family secrets, and placed "in a position which made equivocation on his part almost a necessity." Of another mould is that Dr. Paulus whose curiosity in other people's affairs made him so ready a mediator in them,—any new experience, any unusual incident, being to him so much raw material of sociological speculation; who enjoyed a puzzle—especially a puzzle involving strange mental and moral conditions; and who, understanding life thoroughly, knew how much that is mysterious, oblique, and inconsistent is mixed up with the ordinary course of existence. Coleridge's old friend, Mr. Poole, of Nether Stowey, is a good specimen of the plain, straightforward, practical, friendly referee, as described by De Quincey, who signalizes his entire self-dedication to the service of his humble fellow-countrymen, the hewers of wood and drawers of water in that southern part of Somersetshire; he being for many miles round the general arbiter of their disputes, the guide and counsellor of their difficulties—like William of Deloraine, good at need,—like George Eliot's ideal, that very present help in time of trouble, a natural priest, without canonicals,—like the Doctor Aston of another novelist, who had become the confidential friend of all his patients, and was sent for by them as often to allay family irritation as to heal recognized bodily ailments. Sir Arthur Helps describes his Thurston as one of those men in whom all people are prone to confide—who go through life, listening to innumerable secrets—indeed for whom there are no secrets; who are confided in, not so much from the expectation of sympathy, as from the certainty of whatever you tell them being understood and appreciated—though perhaps there is little difference between understanding and sympathizing. To our motley gathering of confidants, casuists, family arbiters, and the like, may be added such representative men as Herr Professor Gellert, who had sheaves of letters daily, about affairs of the conscience, of the household, of the heart; and Monsieur Diderot *père*, as Carlyle depicts him, of great

humanity, of great insight and discretion, "so that he was often chosen as umpire and adviser;" and George Washington too, who, long before he had made a name, "assumed trusts at the solicitation of friends, and was in much request as an arbitrator"—even at school George had been *that*. And do we not read of Njal, the Burnt Njal of the Icelandic Saga, that he was "of good counsel and ready to give it; . . . gentle and generous, he unravelled every man's knotty points who came to see him about them"? Not wider than deep and lasting is the influence of such an authority as Wordsworth has pictured, among the hill folk of the lakes:

"To him appeal was made as to a judge;
 Who, with an understanding heart allay'd
 The perturbation, listening to the plea;
 Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
 So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
 With soften'd spirit, even when it condemn'd."

* * * * *

There is something to remind us of Friar Laurence in the Father Clement of Scott's historical romance,—that "best and kindest man in the world," so Simon Glover characterizes him, "with a comfort for every man's grief, a counsel for every man's difficulty, the rich man's surest guide, and the poor man's trustiest friend." Coleridge, in his seventh lecture, made Friar Laurence his text for a homily on the different manner in which Shakspeare has treated the priestly character, as compared with other writers,—with Beaumont and Fletcher, for instance, in whose plays "priests are represented as a vulgar mockery," the errors of the few being mistaken for the habit of the many; while in Shakspeare they always carry with them our love and respect. "He made no injurious abstracts; he took no copies from the worst parts of our nature; and, like the rest, his characters of priests are truthfully drawn from the general body." Sound critics are in the main agreed that his religion was as catholic as his genius; for a mind so august was never yet tenanted by the sour spirit of sectarianism. Macaulay has expatiated on the remarkable manner in which the

greatest and most popular dramatists of the Elizabethan age treat religious subjects : they speak respectfully of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity ; but they speak neither like Romanists nor like Protestants, but like persons who are wavering between the two systems, or who have made a system for themselves out of parts selected from both. He affirms almost every member of a religious order whom they introduce, to be a holy and venerable man,—nothing in their plays resembling the coarse ridicule with which the Roman faith and its ministers were assailed, two generations later, by dramatists who wished to please the multitude. “The partiality of Shakspeare for Friars is well known.” Hartley Coleridge takes his intellect to have been not only representative of the State, but of the Church—since it was not only in just and balanced proportion (monarchical, aristocratical, and popular), but metaphysical too, and in some sort theological. Not that he turned the theatre into a conventicle—he wrote neither sermons nor sacred dramas (so called)—nor does he abound in allusions to the religious disputes of the time. “I doubt not he was a good Protestant, malgre the purgatory of Hamlet’s Ghost, and the very favourable specimen of monastic virtues exhibited in Friar Laurence.” As a lay poet, he wisely and reverently abstained from frequent allusions to religion, either in comic or serious vein ; but his genius is argued to have been theological, in this respect, and to this extent, that in fathoming the abyss of human nature, he transcended nature, and explored the hidden regions of the soul,—discovered instincts, prophetic yearnings, unutterable vacuities of spirit, which nothing in the sensible or intellectual world can satisfy or fulfil. This nevertheless is the poet of whom Michelet made the memorable affirmation, or negation rather,—“As far as I recollect, the name of God does not occur in Shakspeare, or, if it does, it is rarely, and by chance, and unaccompanied by the shadow of a religious sentiment.” Had M. Michelet ever come across the two most celebrated soliloquies in Shakspeare,—that of Hamlet, and that of the fallen Cardinal Wolsey ?

That Shakspeare, amidst the rancour of religious parties, should take a delight in painting the condition of a monk, and should always represent his influence as beneficial, is deemed worthy of special remark by the elder Schlegel, who is thankful to find in him none of the black and knavish monks all too common in later poets. Shakspeare merely gives his monks an inclination to busy themselves in the affairs of others, after renouncing the world for themselves; with respect, however, to pious frauds, he does not represent them as very conscientious.* “Il est peintre de la nature humaine au fond, sans acception ni préoccupation de culte, de dogme fixe, d'interprétation formelle.” †

Whether Shakspeare was a Protestant has been debated and answered to the satisfaction of both sections of contending zealots. Impartial and intelligent criticism sees and says that Shakspeare's poetry, resting upon a purely human basis, is not a rendering into art of the dogmas of either Catholicism or Protestantism. It says that Shakspeare himself, a great artistic nature, framed for manifold joy and pain, may, like other artists, have had no faculty for the attainment of certitude upon extra-mundane and superhuman matters; of concrete moral facts he had the clearest perception, but we do not find that he was interested, at least as an artist, in truths or alleged truths which transcend the limits of human experience. It says that to Shakspeare there seemed a profound significance, which might almost be called religious, in the fact that the world suggests inquiries which cannot be answered, mysteries which confront and baffle us, ignorance compassing about our knowledge, and darkness our light. But studiously as Shakspeare abstains from embodying theological dogma in his art, and tolerant as his spirit is, it is certain, Professor Dowden maintains, that the spirit of Protestantism,—of

* “Such are the parts acted by the monk in *Romeo and Juliet*, and another in *Much Ado about Nothing*, and even by the Duke [in *Measure for Measure*], whom, contrary to the well-known proverb, the cowl seems really to make a monk.”—A. W. Schlegel, *Dramatic Art*, xxiv.

† Sainte-Beuve : *Port-litt.*, ii. 11.

Protestantism considered as portion of a great movement of humanity,—animates and breathes through his writings; and indeed, unless he had stood in antagonism to his time, it could not be otherwise. "Shakspeare's creed is not a series of abstract statements of truth, but a body of concrete impulses, tendencies, and habits." The spirit of his faith, it is justly urged, is not to be ascertained by bringing together little sentences from the utterances of this one of his *dramatis personæ* and of that—a method by which he might be proved (as Birch tried to prove him) an atheist.* Rather would the true student of his Mind and Art essay to discover the faith by which Shakspeare lived, by noting the total issue and resultant of his art towards the fostering and sustenance of a certain type of human character. "It may be asserted, without hesitation, that the Protestant type of character, and the Protestant polity in state and nation, is that which has received impulse and vigour from the mind of the greatest of English poets." What are the habits of thought and feeling which belong more especially to the Protestant ideal of manhood? "Energy, devotion to the fact, self-government, tolerance, a disbelief in minute apparatus for the improvement of human character, an indifference to externals in comparison with that which is of the invisible life, and a resolution to judge all things from a human standpoint,"—and these are truly alleged to grow upon us as habits of thought and feeling, as long as Shakspeare remains an influence with us in the building up of character.

There are certain problems, it is elsewhere pointed out, which Shakspeare at once pronounces insoluble. "He does not, like Milton, propose to give any account of the origin of evil." Here, upon the earth, evil *is*—such was Shakspeare's declaration in the most emphatic accent: Iago actually exists. How Iago can be, and why Cordelia lies strangled upon the breast of Lear,—it is a portion of the "severity" of Shakspeare to decline all answers to such questions as

* Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakspeare, 1848.

these. "Is ignorance painful? Well, then, it is painful. Little solutions of your large difficulties can readily be obtained from priest or *philosophe*. Shakspeare prefers to let you remain in the solemn presence of a mystery. He does not invite you into his little church or his little library brilliantly illuminated by philosophical or theological rush-lights. You remain in the darkness. But you remain in the open air. And the great night is overhead." So with history, its use and meaning, as expounded by Mr. Froude, who remarks that in the writings of those historians to whom the world has given the highest place, we find nothing didactic at all; in proportion as their perceptions are distinct, any special moral disappears out of their records; they were content to depict what they saw in its naked simplicity, and were great because they did so. Their philosophy, if they had any, he says, was one rather of suspense than of conviction; and in their hands, as in those of Homer or of Shakspeare, human life was an unresolved mystery, yielding many morals, but none which adequately explain it, none which leave upon the mind any certain conviction of its destiny or its nature. Mr. Lewes likens Shakspeare to Goethe in being a decided realist,—content to let his pictures of life carry their own moral with them: he uttered no "moral verdict;" he was no Chorus preaching on the text of what he pictured; hence we cannot gather from his works what his opinions were. Schiller in early life was "indignant at his coldness." "It was insufferable to me that this poet gave me nothing of himself."* Of Shakspeare may be said what Campbell said of Homer, that, like Nature, he is fruitful in creating characters, and, like her, impartial in distributing and in-

* Philarète Chasles found a charm in what repelled Schiller. "Il y a dans Shakspeare non pas un scepticisme systématique, mais une absence de parti pris sur toutes choses, qui rend la lecture de ses drames fort attrayante pour nous, alors même que nous ne comprenons ni la poésie de ses tableaux, ni la finesse de son dessein, ni la profondeur de ses observations sur le caractère humain."—*Etudes sur le drame Espagnol*, § vii.

trusting virtues to contending parties.* Scott has been compared to him, in regard of their general and almost universal sympathies, leading to impartial and kindly views of all men and all opinions, the most remote from their own.† To others he seems unfavourably to outdo even Claudian in what the *Quarterly Review* called that poet's "extraordinary religious indifference." A couplet from Dryden's prologue to the *Don Sebastian* might to them appear applicable to Shakspeare :

"Jove was alike to Latian and to Phrygian ;
And you well know, a play's of no religion."

Or there might be preferred the scope of the last stanza in Mr. Tennyson's *Palace of Art*,—

"I care not what the sects may brawl ;

* "Il ne prend aucun parti dans les agitations politiques de l'Angleterre. Les puritains ont levé la tête, et il n'est pas puritain ; les catholiques se révoltent et il n'est pas catholique," etc.—CHASLES, *Etudes sur l'Antiquité*, § i.

In his *Marginalia* on *King Henry VIII.*, Hartley Coleridge lays stress on the great prudence with which Shakspeare avoided allusion to the religious disputes of the time ; and claims for him, both as a writer and as a man, more of that unromantic quality than some people deem compatible with lofty genius :—we never hear of his coming in collision with the Master of the Revels, or bringing the wrath of court or city upon his profession. Nor would he use the privilege of the stage to catch the popular sympathies for his likes or dislikes.

Friar Laurence was no doubt *inter alios* in Hartley's mind when he elsewhere observes of Shakspeare, that wherever any character appears, simply as the representative of his vocation, the representative man is always endued with honour and dignity : the friar, the judge, the physician, are, each in their several capacities, worthy and reverend members of society :—if individuals of any profession be held up to scorn or laughter, the ridicule is always so individualized and circumscribed that it cannot diffuse itself over the profession in general.

† "The excrescences and superfœtations of my own church most freely do I yield up to his censure ; for while in his Abbot Boniface, his Friar Tuck, and his intriguing Rashleigh, he has justly stigmatized monastic laziness, and denounced ultramontane duplicity, he has not forgotten to exhibit the bright reverse of the Roman medal, but has done full measure of justice to the nobler inspirations of our creed."—*Reliques of Father Prout*.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

Shakspeare's plays, observes an able anonymous critic, convey the general impression that the controversies of his day led him to leave on one side the restraints of definite creeds of all kinds, and to take an artistic, enjoying, sympathetic view of human life, altogether apart from theology, not to say alien to it. "There is in his writings much more nature than grace." If Mr. Carlyle once styled Dante the melodious Priest of Middle-Age Catholicism, so has he called Shakspeare the still more melodious Priest of a *true* Catholicism, the Universal Church of the Future and of all times. No narrow superstition, harsh asceticism, intolerance, fanatical fierceness or perversion. But, "I cannot call this Shakspeare a 'Sceptic,' as some do; his indifference to the creeds and theological quarrels of his time misleading them—No; neither unpatriotic, though he says little about his Patriotism; nor sceptic, though he says little about his Faith. Such 'indifference' was the fruit of his greatness withal: his whole heart was in his grand sphere of worship (we may call it such); these other controversies, vitally important to other men, were not vital to him." Elsewhere the same pen suggests as one of the similarities between Shakspeare and Goethe, the majestic calmness of both; their perfect tolerance for all men and all things,—in either case proceeding from the same source, perfect clearness of vision.

A discerning spirit would qualify the freedom with which we are accustomed to speak of the tenderness, the infinite tolerance of the genius of Shakspeare, by a reminder that any impartial student must surely be no less impressed by the unyielding justice of Shakspeare, his stern fidelity to fact; and by the large demands he makes upon human character. By much of our passionate intolerance founded upon prejudice, and personal or class feeling, Shakspeare, as Professor Dowden affirms, remained wholly untouched: when we come to him, and miss our own little bitternesses and violences, and find him so large and human, we naturally describe him as tolerant. But his tolerance is shown to

be nothing else but justice; and even his humour, the humour of a man framed for abundant joy and sorrow, has in it something of severity; because he employs it to recover himself from the narrowing intensity of his enthusiasms, and to restore him to the level of every-day facts. "In the characters of the weak or the wicked whom he condemns, Shakspeare denies no beautiful or tender trait; but he condemns them without reprieve." The question is put, shall we hesitate to admit that there was a Timon in the breast of Shakspeare? We are accustomed, the questioner alleges, to speak of Shakspeare's gentleness and tolerance so foolishly, that we find it easier to conceive of him as indulgent towards baseness and wickedness, than as feeling measureless rage and indignation against them—rage and indignation which would sometimes flash beyond their bounds, and strike at the whole wicked race of man. Certain as it confessedly is that Shakspeare's delight in human character, and his quick and penetrating sympathy with almost every variety of man, saved him from any persistent injustice towards the world, "it can hardly be doubted that the creator of Hamlet, of Lear, of Timon, saw clearly, and felt deeply, that there is a darker side to the world and to the soul of man." It has been said that, after all, anybody can enforce the moral view of conduct and character, while it needs both a certain faculty of poetic vision, and a very wide range of human sympathy such as we do not secure in conjunction once in a generation, to reproduce a character and to judge it, or maybe deliberately to abstain from judging it, in all its diversified completeness. Hence, argues a dissertator on the ethical standard of character, hence the charm of the greatness of Shakspeare, who is never distinctly moral, yet whose power of attraction is infinite, because he takes character all round, high and low, austere and jocund, in every shade, and with fulness of every quality. "Above all things, he is not careful to refer character to any standard at all, but only to present it as it is; and this is why the poet has so much greater power over mankind than the professed moralist,

though the one aims directly and urgently after the improvement of his fellows, and the other, when at his best, works without any such aim." So again Professor Lowell takes Shakspeare's moral to be the moral of worldly wisdom only heightened to the level of his wide-viewing mind, and made typical by the dramatic energy of his plastic nature. Coleridge's assertion that Shakspeare, as it were, identified himself with everything except the vicious, met with this objection on the part of his friend Crabb Robinson,—that if Shakspeare's "becoming" a character is to be determined by the truth and vivacity of his delineation, he had "become" some of the vicious characters as well as the virtuous. Balzac's glorification at the hands of M. Taine, on the ground that, by rising above moral trammels, he paints men and passions as they are, is an offence to those who believe Balzac to paint his characters as they would be if morality did not exist. If, it is argued, in the artist's eye every sort of infamy is merely matter of curiosity, it surely follows that the artist has a distorted and imperfect conception of human nature: a really great artist will not only show his characters correctly, but will judge them correctly, and love and hate them according to their deserts, and lead the reader to do so too, just as "Shakspeare hated Richard III. notwithstanding his great qualities, and loved Henry V. with all his faults." None the less to be distinguished in him is what Carlyle terms "an all-comprehending spirit,"—skilled, as if by personal experience, in all the modes of human passion and opinion, and therefore tolerant of all; peaceful, collected; fighting for no class of men or principles; rather looking on the world, and the various battles waging in it, with the quiet eye of one already reconciled to the futility of their issues: "allowing men and things of every shape and hue to have their own free scope in his conception, as they have it in the world where Providence has placed them." Shaftesbury says of Homer, in the *Characteristics*, that he "censures no manners, makes no encomiums, nor gives characters himself; but brings his actors still in view. 'Tis they who show

themselves." So an American expositor alleges of Shakspeare that he is, above all other poets, distinguished for never explaining his characters: he creates them, sets them before us in speech and action, and then leaves it to us to find them out—just as in real life we have to study the characters and tempers of actual men and women, and often without actually knowing them. "It is this which constitutes the self-forgetting intrepidity of the genuine artist, disdaining to be his own commentator." Philarète Chasles describes him as judging men with a chill indifference that desolates, and a profundity that terrifies—discovering the slightest foible in the loftiest virtue, the faintest tinge of virtue in the most criminal soul, and never at the pains to draw any conclusion from the discovery. A "lordly spectacle," Mr. Carlyle calls it, how this great soul takes in all kinds of men and objects, sets them forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. "No twisted, poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly *level* mirror;—that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man." In the last letter he ever wrote—it was to Sir Robert Peel—Thomas Hood did homage to that "catholic Shakspearian sympathy, which felt with king as well as peasant, and duly estimated the mortal temptations of both stations." Hazlitt declared Shakspeare to be in one sense the least moral of all writers; since morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his genius consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations. Hence, if, in one sense, Shakspeare was no moralist at all; in another, he was the greatest of all moralists—a moralist in the sense in which nature is one: he taught what he had learned from her; he showed the greatest knowledge of humanity, with the greatest fellow-feeling for it.*

* In another place Hazlitt tells us that Shakspeare "never committed himself to his characters;" that he trifled, laughed, or wept with them as

A thoughtful man must, to Archbishop Trench's thinking, be often deeply struck with the immeasurable advantage for being the great poet of all humanity, of all ages and all people, which Shakspeare possessed in being a Protestant. For although at the first blush of the matter there may be a temptation to conclude otherwise,—to fancy him at a disadvantage, shut out, as he thus was, from the rich mythology, the gorgeous symbolism, the manifold legend, and from many other sources of interest which a poet of the Roman Catholic Church would command,—yet, whatever losses might thereby be his, whatever springs and sources of poetry might be closed to him on this account,—all this was countervailed by far greater gains. Some impartial critics, indeed, are even yet undecided whether Rome and the Vatican have not as good a right to call him son as Lambeth or Fulham. Sound English churchmen there are who own themselves not entirely convinced by Bishop Wordsworth's* vindication of him as an orthodox divine and a true member of the Anglican Church. But none of these will deny that he held in respect such forms of Christianity as presented themselves to him, and was free from the intemperate spirit of those brother playwrights who scrupled not to assail the Puritans, or to put their villains into gown and cassock. Shakspeare's genius, says one of Dr. Wordsworth's reviewers, was too universal in its complexion for theological malevolence: he has no Aminadab Holdfast, no Friar Dominic, among his *dramatis personæ*, no tonsured sorcerers like Friar Bungay: even heathen priests, when he had need of them, are decently handled by him;—he evidently felt that, under any garb, honest ministers of religion are not proper objects for satire.

he chose; had no prejudices for or against them; and was seemingly indifferent whether he should be in jest or earnest. He saw both sides of a question, and was at once an actor and spectator in the scene.

* Charles, of St. Andrew's; not Christopher, of Lincoln.

CHAPTER VI.

From Dining upon Air to Dancing on it.

§ I.

TANTALIZING TABLE TALK.

Taming of the Shrew, Act iv., Sc. 3.

GRUMIO, the man, has a mind to ape Petruchio, his master, as well as to play into his master's hands, in the taming of a shrew, his mistress. Hunger is a taming influence, though it may, in excess, become a maddening one; and Grumio amuses himself with alternately exciting and frustrating, inciting and disappointing, egging on and then thrusting back, the hungry lady's cravings. He tantalizes her to the top of his bent,—makes a very Tantalus* of her

* "When to the water he his lip applies,
Back from his lip the treacherous water flies.
Above, beneath, around his hapless head
Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread; . . .
The fruit he strives to seize; but blasts arise,
Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies."

So figures Tantalus in the Stygian shades as visited by Odysseus. We are reminded of him in Dante's Adamo of Brescia, as seen in the Inferno, all fevered and athirst: the rills that glitter down the grassy slopes of Casentino, making fresh and soft the banks whereby they glide to Arno's stream, stand ever in his view; and more the pictured semblance dries him up, than does the disease itself from which he suffers. Byron has a stirring battle-field picture, of some who "too near that rolling torrent lie, Whose waters mock the lip of those that die." Well may Horace say *Quid rides?* to whoso inclines to grin at his picture of Tantalus "*a labris sitiens fugientia captans Flumina.*" *Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur*, he adds; and the passage may, or must, have been in Mr. Emerson's mind when he wrote, in his essay on History, "Tantalus is

to feed his mirth with her unfed emptiness. Great expectations he raises in her, appetizing propositions he suggests to her, not that she may have a good dinner, but that he may have a good laugh.

"Gru. What say you to a neat's foot?

Kath. 'Tis passing good, I pr'ythee let me have it.

Gru. I fear it is too choleric a meat :

How say you to a fat tripe, finely broil'd?

Kath. I like it well ; good Grumio, fetch it me.

Gru. I cannot tell ; I fear 'tis choleric.

What say you to a piece of beef, and mustard?

Kath. A dish that I do love to feed upon.

Gru. Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.

Kath. Why, then the beef, and let the mustard rest.

Gru. Nay, then, I will not ; you shall have the mustard,

Or else you get no beef of Grumio.

Kath. Then both, or one, or anything thou wilt.

Gru. Why, then the mustard without the beef.

Kath. Go, get thee gone, thou false deluding slave ;

[Beats him.

That feed'st me with the very name of meat."

And if Katharine boxed the varlet's ears, who shall very much blame her? Was there not a box on the ear bestowed by Schacabac on the Barmecide, at the sham feast promoted by the latter in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments? Such

but a name for you and me,"—as meaning the impossibility of drinking the waters of thought which are always gleaming and waving within sight of the soul. *Egens benignæ Tantalus semper dapis*, is another Horatian reference. There is a touch of him—though off at the tangent, or indeed at nothing tangible—in the love's labour lost of the Ovidian Narcissus : the English is Addison's :—

"To the cold waters oft he joins his lips,
Oft catching at the beauteous shade he dips
His arms, as often from himself he slips."

It is only for a French poet in his cups to have a vision of *Tantale ivre mort*, dead drunk. Yet Béranger was a water-drinker. Balzac has a vigorous simile to suggest how Delphine loved Rastignac, "*autant que Tantale aurait aimé l'ange qui serait venu satisfaire sa faim, ou étancher la soif de son gosier desséché.*" What creature ever fed worse than hoping Tantalus? is Bosola's question in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Theophilus in *The Virgin Martyr* gloats on this among other picturesque tortures by him inflicted : "Two hundred rammed in the earth To the

a box on the ear as made the Barmecide fall down, and deprecate another, which Schacabac's uplifted arm had quite ready: the result being that the long-suffering guest was treated by his tantalizing host to a profusion of the dainties, in reality, which he had been so obsequiously eating in fancy. As complaisant the ahungred visitor had been up to the moment of the *soufflet*, as the guests of Elia's Captain Jackson had by constraint of courtesy to be, when they sat at table with that gallant veteran, and saw with their bodily eyes what seemed a bare scrag—cold savings from the foregone meal—remnant hardly sufficient to send a mendicant from the door contented; while in the revelling imagination of their host—"the mind, the mind, Master Shallow,"—whole beeves

armpits, and full platters round about them, But far enough for reaching. Eat, dogs, ha! ha! ha!" Mephistopheles in Faust's long gown promises (aside) the experience of Tantalus to his presuming pupil:

"And, as in mockery of his greedy haste,
Viands shall hang his craving lips beyond,—
Vainly he'll seek refreshment, anguish-tost."

Coleridge tenderly pities that selfsame experience in the Ass he "hailed brother, spite of the fool's scorn"—tethered as the poor beast was in so tantalizing a way—chained to a log within a narrow spot, where the close-eaten grass could scarce be seen, while sweet around him waved the tempting green.

When in partial response to the screams for "Water! water!" in the Black Hole at Calcutta some skins of the precious fluid were brought to the window, they proved too large to pass through the iron bars, and the sight of this relief, so near and yet withheld, says one historian, served only to infuriate and wellnigh madden the miserable captives, who began to fight and trample one another down, striving for a nearer place to the window, and for a few drops of the water; all to the amusement of the guards, who, so far from pitying, or trying to relieve the sufferers, held up lights to the bars, with fiendish glee, to discern the *ensemble*, the *mêlée*, more clearly. As coolly these "assistants" at the performance took it, as Alcibiades in Macaulay's *Athenian Revels* takes, by imaginative anticipation, the anguish of Speusippus, when he shall "sit starved and thirsty in the midst of fruit and wine like Tantalus. Poor fellow! I think I see your face as you are springing up to the branches and missing your aim." Legendary is the doom poetized in the *Indian Fount*, for him who has once gazed on those illusory waters:

"Earth has no spring to quench the thirst
That semblance in his soul shall wake,

were spread before them—hecatombs—no end appeared to the profusion. We are reminded of the blow the Barmecide got, when Ben Jonson's Fly presently follows up the line, "He shall think he sees his horse eat half a bushel," with the afterthought, "But, coz, have a care of understanding horses, Horses with angry heels." Not to every temper is it given to exercise imagination on short commons after the manner of John Baptist Cavalletto in the Marseilles prison, when he ate his bit of dry bread with a relish by the help of his fancy sauce. "I can cut my bread so—like a melon. Or so—like an omelette. Or so—like a fried fish. Or so—like Lyons sausage." Triplet, starving playwright, without design or

For ever pouring thro' his dreams
 The gush of those untasted streams.
 Bright, bright in many a rocky urn
 The waters of our deserts lie,
 Yet at their source his lip shall burn,
 Parch'd with the fever's agony."

The shipwrecked boat's crew in Mr. Charles Reade's *Foul Play* have their tortures aggravated by the sight of abundance. They drift over coral rocks, and can see five fathoms down, so exquisitely clear the water; can discern small fish drifting over the bottom, upon the driving cloud of which, every now and then, porpoises and dog-fish break in and take their fill. "All this they saw, and yet could not catch one of those billions for their lives. Thus they were tantalized as well as starved." One man goes mad anon; and as his madness grows upon him, it takes a turn by no means uncommon in such cases: he sees before him sumptuous feasts, and streams of fresh water flowing. "These he began to describe with great volubility and rapture, smacking his lips, and exulting; and so he went on tantalizing them till noon." As in Milton,

"of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus."

Hardly inferior the torment described in a later book of the *Paradise Lost*, of those who "greedily plucked the fruitage fair to sight,"—"Oft they essayed, hunger and thirst constraining," only to fill their mouths with ashes: "Thus were they plagued and worn with famine." Nothing so tormenting, rules a divine of Milton's age, as hope snuffed off with disappointment and frustration. And were it lawful to wish an enemy completely miserable, Doctor South would wish that enemy of his might vehemently desire, and never enjoy; if seemingly ever on the point of enjoyment, or within reach of it, so much the better,—because, for the tantalized victim, so much the worse.

malice aforethought, tantalizes his wife and children by reading to them, from the manuscript, as he goes on composing his piece, a grand idea of a sumptuous banquet at which all his dramatis personæ are present: "Music, sparkling wine, massive plate, rose-water in the hand-glasses, soup, fish,—shall I have three sorts of fish? I will; they are cheap in this market. Ah, Fortune, you wretch, here at least I am your master, and I'll make you know it—venison [Triplet therefore goes on writing], game, pickles and provocatives in the centre of the table," etc. Even such another feast Caleb Balderstone promised, or threatened to promise, *à posteriori*, to the visitors at Wolf's Crag, despite the protests of his master, to whom he uttered the partly cautionary, partly defiant *aside*, "If ye let me gang on quietly, I'se be moderate in my banquet; but if ye contradict me, deil but I dress ye a dinner fit for a duke!" And what was the dinner he did dress, out of nothing, for the amused and incredulous Ashtons? "Nae muckle provision—might hae served four persons of honour,—first course, capons in white broth—roast kid—bacon with reverence—second course, roasted leveret, butter crabs, a veal florentine—third course, blackcock, . . . plumdamas, a tart, a flam, and some nonsense sweet things and comfits," etc. The peculiar determination of Caleb's manner in detailing his imaginary banquet, excited the almost Homeric laughter of the company; but he stood his ground with a grave, angry, and scornful dignity which but increased their mirth—priding himself as he did on "a description of a dinner," as he afterwards said to Mysie, "That wad hae made a fu' mare hungry, and them to sit there laughing at it!" But some Barmecide idealists come off with a blow instead of a laugh, when it is hungry folk they are dealing with. To be let off with a broad grin, is a light sentence, compared with such a sound cuff as that of Schacabac's which felled his man.

When Ludovico di Varthema was on his travels in the East, within the first decade of the sixteenth century, his position at Aden was so perilous that he pretended to be mad; and the pretence must have been trying to his digestive

powers, for, says he, "these dogs brought me some pieces of marble, saying, 'Eat, this is sugar,' and some others gave me grapes filled with earth, and said that it was salt, and I ate the marbles and the grapes and everything, all together." His teeth must have been a miraculous set, unless the marble was chalk. Miraculous too must have been the lively Venetian's faculty of accommodating himself to his lot, and making the best of a decidedly bad one. Marble would try any one's temper as well as teeth. Organisms unendowed with a gizzard might even prefer dining with Duke Humphrey. Better a light dinner upon, say, nothing at all. Such a dinner as George Herbert suggests in the suggestive phrase, "nothing between two dishes." From another devout lyric of holy George's we may cite a stanza also to our purpose :

"Hungry I was, and had no meat :
I did conceit a most delicious feast ;
I had it straight, and did as truly eat
As ever did a welcome guest."

Average mankind would incline rather, and a good deal sooner, to say with Orlando in Arden, "I can live no longer by thinking." The baser sort are of one mind, generally, with Psyllus the slave, in Lilly's *Campaspe*, who has no patience with counterfeits: "I serve Apelles, who feedeth me as Diogenes does Manes ; for at dinner, the one preacheth abstinence, the other commendeth counterfeiting. When I would eat meat, he paints a spit ; and when I thirst, 'Oh,' saith he, 'is not this a fair pot ?' and points to a table which contains the banquet of the gods, where are many dishes to feed the eye, but not to fill the gut." Psyllus plays on the word counterfeiting,—which (as in *Hamlet*) means painting ; but the word is hateful to him, as well as the thing ; he would prefer surfeit and surfeiting to counterfeit and counterfeiting.

When the Rev. James Townley's *High Life below Stairs* was played in Dublin, Knipe the comedian, wit and *bon vivant* in one, feasted by anticipation on the good roast fowl and bottle of wine at supper in the last scene ; but the property-man was, like Mrs. John Gilpin, of a frugal

mind ; and when Knipe stuck his stage fork into the stage fowl to dissect it with a practised carver's skill, he found the creature to be a piece of painted timber.* He filled his glass, as he supposed, with wine ; but coloured water was the total outcome. That he bestowed slap or smack on the property-man, does not appear ; but the bon vivant had his bon mot for the occasion, and remarked that instead of his bottle and his bird he had a fine subject for a landscape-painter,—wood, and water.

His Holiness Pope Leo the Twelfth has a similar experience to recount, in his (imaginary) conversation with his valet Gigi. Three large salmons and three codfish, salted and smoked, had reached him from the Archbishop of Pisa, with directions not to open, cut to pieces, or wash them, as it would be injurious to the flavour and would damage the flakes. The Holy Father's mouth watered on the third day of Lent, when one of each was served up at his table, and his appetite was sharper than usual. "Maria-Fabrizzo, on applying the knife, fell at my feet and kissed them, and asked me humbly, with his eyes closed, whether it was my pleasure that it should be a miracle or not. I wondered what the man meant. He brought before me the two fishes ; a strong smell of turpentine invaded my nostrils ; the two dainties were of pine-wood, a salmon-skin and cod-skin being drawn over

* An authority upon all matters histrionic discourses eloquently upon the wooden fowls and brown paper pies on which the nobles of the stage feast richly, quaffing, meanwhile, deep potations of toast-and-water sherry, or, haply, golden goblets full of nothing at all. Some of the goblets, he tells us, together with elaborate flasks of exhilarating emptiness, and dishes of lovely fruit, more deceptive than Dead Sea apples (for they have not even got ashes inside them), are nailed to the festive board itself. On very great occasions, by his account, the bowl is wreathed with cotton wool, and the viands smoke with a cloud of powdered lime. He challenges our amused pity for some haughty Hospodar of Hungary drinking confusion to some Bold Bandit of Bulgaria in a liquorless cup, vainly thirsting, meanwhile, for a pint of mild porter from the nearest tap ; or again for those retainers of his who are seen deep in the enjoyment of warden pies and lusty capons, while their empty insides are crying dolorously for three penn'orth of cold boiled beef.

them." For this insult, offered to him in the first instance, he understood, by "one Ahab Rigworthy of Connecticut," the Pope avows his resolve to forbid the Americans to visit Rome.

In the Memorials of his own time Lord Cockburn dilates on the famine of 1795, when an eighth of the population of Edinburgh were fed by charity ; and while chemistry strained itself to extract nutriment from sapless stuff, one "ingenious sacrifice in wealthy houses was to produce an appearance of wheat at table without the reality. So dishes were invented which in shape and colour resembled the forbidden articles,* and the knife often struck on what seemed good pie-crust, but was only clay." Tantalizing ; but scarcely so much so as the state of things in time of war, set forth in the Biglow poems,—

"When even whiskey's getting skurce, and sugar can't be found,
To know that all the ellements o' luxury abound."

Rabbinical literature gives us to understand that the manna which fell in the wilderness had the faculty of accommodating itself to the palate of all such as did not murmur: it became fish, flesh, or fowl, as taste (or fancy) preferred. Satirico-sacerdotal literature inveighs against the dogma of transubstantiation, under the guise of Peter's panegyric of a brown loaf ; for bread, he instructs Martin and Jack, is the staff of life, and contains, as such, inclusively, the quintessence of beef, mutton, veal, venison, partridge, plum-pudding, and custard ; upon the strength of which argument he has the brown loaf served up at dinner with all the formalities of a city feast." "Come, brothers, fall to, and spare not ; here is excellent good mutton." With great submission Brother Martin doubts there may be some mistake, as he eyes the slice on his plate: was there not a word dropped about "mutton" ? and if so, where is it ? Jack, too, owns to a longing for the promised mutton ; and Peter owns to a suspicion that both his guests are a trifle mad, or unaccountably

* A public proclamation specified the exact quantity of bread which each family might consume,—about a loaf per "individual" weekly.—*Memorials*, p. 72.

merry; but if they don't like the piece he has cut for them, he will carve them another—though he must say he had given them the choice part of the whole shoulder. "What, then, my lord," quoth Martin, "it seems this is a shoulder of mutton all this while?" Martin's protest that to *him* it seems nothing but a crust of bread, is backed anon by Jack's avowal, that never in his life had he seen a shoulder of mutton so nearly resembling a quartern loaf. Dean Swift appears to have been not over-careful to guard against or provide for the obvious objection, that no distinction is here drawn between the sacramental theories of Luther and Calvin, and that consubstantiation is left out in the cold.

That promising Prince of Wales who, unhappily, never came to be King of England,—Henry, eldest son of James the First,—was once, as a boy, entertained with his suite at a nobleman's house where parsimony was the order of the day,—parsimony so pronounced, indeed, that the prince's servants had to go, supperless to bed. The story goes that, next morning, the lady of the house coming to pay her respects, found H.R.H. turning over the leaves of a picture-book, one of which, that represented a company sitting at a banquet, he showed her. "I invite you, madam, to a feast," said the boy. "To what feast?" asked her ladyship. "To this feast," he replied. "What!" exclaimed his hostess, "would your Highness give me but a painted feast?" "No better, madam, is found in this house." The elder Disraeli admires in this ingenious reproach "a delicacy and greatness of spirit" far excelling the wit of a child.

Sancho's mortification at table, as Governor of Barataria, when, at a sign from the officious wand-bearer, every dainty was snatched away before the great man could get a good mouthful of it, is worthy of a passing notice in a chapter of tantalizing table-talk. Be it a dish of fruit, or a plate of roasted partridges, or a mess of stewed rabbits, or a fillet of veal, or a savoury olla-podrida,—no matter, the craving governor is put off with wafers and marmelade, and *so* let digestion wait on appetite. Poor Sancho sighs from the

depths of his capacious stomach for anything as substantial as a crust of bread and an onion. So with Queen Blanche in the fairy tale,—there was a physician, just like Doctor Pedro Rezio, to inspect whatever she ate or drank, and to order everything she liked off the table. In the fourth of his Moral Essays, Pope figures himself at a feast which recalls the experience of Don Quixote's squire :

“ So quick retires each flying course, you'd swear
 Sancho's dread doctor and his wand were there . . .
 In plenty starving, tantalized in state,
 And complaisantly help'd to all I hate,” etc.

Petruchio plays the doctor, to tame his shrew, when he flings away the meat from before hungry Katharine, under the pretence that it is burnt, and that she would be the worse for it. He has first tantalized her by the summons to table : “ Come, Kate, sit down ; I know you have a stomach ;” and in the next breath, he declares all the viands to be overdone, and flings them to the floor. His craving wife remonstrates, and he persists. He will show her who is Governor in Barataria.

“ *Kath.* I pray you, husband, be not so disquiet ;
 The meat was well, if you were so contented.
Petr. I tell thee, Kate, 'twas burnt and dried away ; . . .
 And better 'twere that both of us did fast,—
 Since, of ourselves, ourselves are choleric,—
 Than feed it [choler] with such over-roasted flesh.”

We may apply the pathetic lament of the slave in Terence : *Crucior, bolum mihi tantum ereptum tam desubito e faucibus*. Or again what Sainte-Beuve says of those who “ font venir l'eau à la bouche et qui ne désalterent pas ;” or, say, M. Loudierre's simile of one who holds out his snuff-box to you, and withdraws it, or keeps invitingly opening and forbiddingly closing the lid, while humming to himself : “ J'ai du bon tabac dans ma tabatière ; j'ai du bon tabac, tu n'en auras pas.” We think of Sancho Panza again as we look on Queen Henrietta Maria, the day of her arrival in England, when the King performed the office of a carver for her, and plied her with venison and pheasant, the while her ghostly confessor stood

beside her, and warned her that this was the eve of St. John the Baptist, and to be fasted,—so let her beware. We think of him too when we read of Prince Henry—the elder brother of Charles—snubbed in his enjoyment of cold capon in cold weather, and warned by his physician against the contingent consequences of this double chill; at another time checked by the same obtrusive authority, when eating hot and cold together. *Que voulez-vous, messieurs les médecins?* It is almost as bad as hungry Sganarelle in Molière sitting down with glee to a goodly repast, and having his plate and his cup withdrawn abruptly and alternately by the mischievous agency of Ragotin and La Violette. Sganarelle has no fancy for such a perennial supply of clean plates. Let him clear them off himself, and take his own time. To adopt the strain of Zigranes in Beaumont and Fletcher,

“Thou might'st as well
Search i' the deep of winter thro' the snow
For half-starved people to bring home with thee
To show them fire and send them back again,
As use me thus.”

The Lady Emily of one of Mrs. Gore's books must have been an angel to bear as smilingly as she did with the devices for her comfort hourly inflicted on her by the Earl, her father: if thirsty, she must not drink; if hungry, she must not eat: she must always distrust her own inclinations, lest she put an untimely end to the hopes of his House. The maternal Lady Maria, in another of them, is not less-trying to her son Claude: he might not ride, he might not bathe, he might not swim, he might not eat or drink, save in accordance with his vigilant mother's formal sanction; and, to one of his propensities, these restrictions soon became insupportable. “Food was a source of indigestion,” with apoplexy to follow. The Spanish Queen under the surveillance of the grim Duchess in *Ruy Blas*, is in no worse plight:

“Ne pouvoir—ô mon Dieu ! qu'est-ce que je ferai !
Ni sortir, ni jouer, ni manger à mon gré !”

So with the mother of Martinus Scriblerus, under the rigorous regimen of her husband Cornelius. The poor woman

never dined but he denied her some dish or other, which he deemed prejudicial to her milk—and for her eyes to light longingly on a piece of beef was enough for the old gentleman at once to snatch it away.

Acting on the doctor's orders, Captain Hamilton, of H.M.S. *Amphitrite*, imposes a salutary restraint on the dinner-table propensities of Lord Tadcaster. There was champagne at dinner the first day, and the noble lord began to pour out a tumbler. "Hold on!" said the captain. "You are not to drink that;" and he quietly removed the tumbler. "Bring him six ounces of claret." While they were weighing the claret with scientific precision, his lordship protested, but in vain. "Here's hospitality," said he. "Six ounces!" He was bilious, and epileptical, it seems; and was sent on a sea voyage, to be cured by diet and blue water.

The author of *Wholesome Fare*, after giving us a good and *con amore* receipt for a "gratin of lobster," proceeds to dictate that no one should sit down to it without care and without the power of abstaining. And a kindred veto follows: "Don't eat sliced cucumber with hot boiled salmon, but there is no harm in having a plate of it handed round to be looked at, and to diffuse the smell." It seems, said his critics, that enjoyment is to consist in making-believe, just as the Marchioness in Dickens found her dry bread the better for rubbing it against the door of the room where the cheese was locked up. Mr. Delamere's Saturday Reviewer avowed that, for his part, he would rather know there was no cucumber than have it close to his nose and be sure all the while that it was not for his mouth.

Matter of history is the old Duke of Burgundy's resentful outcry at table when he missed his favourite dishes,—“Do you mean to hold me in pupilage?” he demanded of the steward he summoned in his wrath. “My lord, the leeches forbid,” was the plea; and for once the leeches were in the right, and in their right. Mr. Disraeli's first work of fiction offers this description of a German Grand-Duke's dinner: “The numerous dishes are at once placed upon the table; and when the curious eye has well examined their contents, the whole

dinner, untouched, disappears." Not for good, however, not finally, as disappeared the viands in the house of Norna of the Fitful Head, for which the Udaller's mouth was watering,—when Norna, seizing upon one article after another, and well supported by the zealous activity of Pacolet, flung their whole preparations over the cliff into the ocean which raged and foamed beneath: *vifda* (dried beef), hams, and pickled pork, flew after each other into empty space, smoked geese were restored to the air, and cured fish to the sea, while a large leathern flask of brandy was sent to follow the rest of the supper, by the hands of Pacolet, who regarded the disappointed Udaller the while with a malicious grin. Magnus Troil might have done worse than copy the tactics of the old Scottish lady dear to Dean Ramsay, whose man Sandy was over-active at a dinner-party in changing her plate, and "whipped it off when he saw that she had got a piece of rich pattee upon it. His mistress not liking such rapid movements, and at the same time knowing that remonstrance was in vain, exclaimed, 'Hout, Sandie, I'm no dune,' and dabbed her fork into the pattee as it disappeared, to rescue a morsel." Which story reminds us, with a difference, of that other one of the genial old dean's, about a "full-eating laird," whose plate, after long and large service, the lady of the house desired the servant to take away, as she saw that he had at last laid down his knife and fork. To her surprise, however, he resumed his work, and she apologized to him, saying, "I thought, Mr. —, you had done." "So I had, mem; but I just fand a doo in the *redd* o' my plate." He had discovered a pigeon lurking amongst the bones and refuse of his plate, and could not resist finishing it. Ill were it to try on such a guest the favourite trick of Elia's James White at the Smithfield supper of chimney-sweeps, when he would intercept a morsel even in the jaws of some sable youngker, declaring it must to the pan again to be browned, for it was not fit for a gentleman's eating.

Hood somewhere describes a dinner, the bill of fare of which he refrains from copying in print, with a circumstantial detail of all the made dishes—a custom as impertinent and

annoying to the reader, he submits, as for a spectator at a theatre, jammed perhaps in a hot back row of the pit, to have his eyes treated with the display of a stage banquet, and his ears with the popping of corks—whereupon some malicious actor advances close to the lights, and deliberately quaffs his sparkling champagne, iced of course, before Tantalus's face. But this is assuming the realism of stage properties. Rather are these of the ideal category of the cates in Hawthorn's fantasy-piece, where there was served up a banquet, combining, if not all the delicacies of the season, yet all the rarities which careful purveyors had met with in the flesh, fish, and vegetable markets of the land of Nowhere—the carte comprising, *inter alia*, a Phoenix, roasted in its own flames; cold potted Birds of Paradise; ice-creams from the Milky Way, and whip-syllabubs and flummery from the Paradise of Fools, whereof there was a very great consumption.

The typical innkeeper of satire would readily undertake to supply all these, and more, if he did not go the length of vowing he always had them in stock or in store. At the inn which, for once, Don Quixote did not mistake for a castle, the landlord assured his guests that whatever the air, earth, and sea produced, of birds, beasts, or fish, his inn was abundantly provided with. "There is no need of all that," quoth Sancho, "roast us but a couple of chickens, and we shall be satisfied." "As for chickens," said the host, "truly we have none, for the kites have devoured them." "Then let a pullet be roasted," said Sancho, "only see that it be tender." "A pullet!" cried the host, "faith and troth, I sent above fifty yesterday to the city to be sold; but, excepting pullets, ask for whatever you will." Sancho then asks accordingly for a good joint of veal or kid, for these cannot be wanting. "Veal or kid?" resumes the landlord; "ah, now I remember we have none in the house at present, for it is all eaten, but next week there will be enough and to spare." Sancho falls back on eggs and bacon. But the innkeeper resents the unreasonableness of his calling for eggs, after being told there are no pullets; and the final outcome of the magniloquent prologue, the mouse born of the man-mountain, is just a pair of

cow-heels, that may be taken for calves' feet.* So with Farquhar's Boniface, in the *Beaux' Stratagem*: "I have everything in the house," he keeps on assuring the fine gentlemen, but whatever they please to name he happens to be out of,—“Please name something else.” Well, then, has he any veal? “Veal, sir? we had a delicate loin of veal on Wednesday last.” Has he got any fish, or wild fowl? “As for the fish, truly, sir, we are an inland town, and indifferently provided with fish, that's the truth on't;—but then for wild fowl,”—and so forth, ever ending with a but. Caleb Balderstone had the making of a Scottish Boniface in him, when he hedged so adroitly with Bucklaw and his master, in the

* When Lady Goodbody and her companion arrive at Joanna Baillie's Country Inn, the landlady is asked what they can have for dinner, and the answer is the canonical one in such quarters, *mutatis mutandis*. The hostess can offer them a very nice pigeon-pie, and some very tender mutton. But she can quote a countess who came there and would dine upon nothing but a good dish of fried eggs and bacon, in spite of other dainties in the house. “I don't say, to be sure, that quality are all as fond of the same sort of victuals: but sometimes it will so happen that the pigeons will not be equally plump and delicate as at other times, let us do what we will with them; and the mutton being fed upon old grass, my lady, will now and then be a little strong tasted or so.—O dear me, if it had not been all eaten up two days ago, I could have given you such a nice turkey! it was to be sure as great a beauty as ever was put upon a spit. Howsoever, you may perhaps after all, ladies, prefer the eggs and bacon.” And the ladies are agreed, upon the whole, that the eggs and bacon *in esse* of to-day, will answer their purpose better than the turkey that was finished two days ago.

So again were Messrs. Proddgers and Tweak, on their travels, in a story of modern life, fain to make the best (and that not bad) of the dish of eggs and bacon in which ended their host's assurance that they could have anything whatever they pleased to order.

Mrs. Gore satirizes the approved fashion innkeepers have of asking you what you will please to have, “though predetermined to inflict the pig and pruin sauce which your soul abhorreth.” A later lady-novelist makes noteworthy the fact that there was no dish ever devised by mortal cook which the sojourner at the Reindeer could not have, according to the preliminary statement of the landlord; yet so it was, that with whatever ambitious design the sojourner began to talk about dinner, the discussion invariably ended, somehow or other, by his ordering a chicken and tart. The roadside innkeeper Nicholas Nickleby had to do with, was pre-

matter of supper,—pawkily hinting, “But ye’ll no be for butcher meat? There’s walth o’ fat poultry ready, either for spit or brander—The fat capon, Mysie,” cries Caleb, as loudly as if such a thing had been in existence. “Quite unnecessary,” interposes Bucklaw, “if you have anything cold, or a morsel of meat.” “The best of bannocks!” exclaims Caleb, much relieved; “and for cauld meat, a’ that we hae is cauld enough,—howbeit maist of the cauld meat and paistry was given to the poor folk,”* etc. Well may sharpset Bucklaw ask his entertainer next morning, “But this same breakfast, Master,—does the deer that is to make the pasty run yet

cautionary in his preliminaries, and answered one question by putting another. “What can you give us for supper?” asked Nicholas.—“Why,—what would you like?” the landlord replied. Nicholas suggested cold meat, but there was no cold meat; poached eggs, but there were no eggs; mutton chops, but there wasn’t a mutton chop within three miles, though there had been more last week than they knew what to do with, and would be an extraordinary supply the day after to-morrow. As an Uncommercial Traveller, Dickens had a renewal, seemingly, of this sort of experience. Asking at the Dolphin what he could have for dinner, he was asked in return what he would like; and as the Dolphin stood possessed of nothing he did like, he was fain to yield to the suggestion of what he did not like.

* There is a touch of Caleb Balderstone in Catherine, the zealous attendant at the Ibarrae auberge, when a guest of unusual culture puts her to her wits’ end by asking for some books to while away the time, and she keeps putting him off with evasive answers, until it comes to the demand direct on his part, “Are there any books in the house, or not?” “Oh, no doubt there are waggon-loads full, monsieur, only they may not be exactly what you want,” says the old woman, driven to bay; but determined, for the credit of the house, not to acknowledge that it does not contain everything a lodger can ask for. “Well, what are they?” “My master writes in them,” said Catherine, remembering her master’s ledgers.

Applicable after the same sort is the stereotyped apology of Mr. Pott, the circulating-library-keeper of St. Ronan’s Well. Let Lady Penelope Penfeather, for instance, ask him for what book she will, his reply takes the form of “Very sorry, my lady—quite out of copies at present—I expect some in my next monthly parcel.” “Good lack, Mr. Pott, that is your never-failing answer,” rejoins the lady, whose belief it is that were she to ask him for the last new edition of the Alkoran, he would tell her it was coming down in his next monthly parcel. As to *that*, Mr. Pott

on foot, as the ballad has it?" For a variety, again, take that Skipper of Theodore Hook's sketching, who vapoured so loftily about the stock of provisions his ship took out, with a colonial governor on board,—“Provisions—psha!—hot rolls every morning; two cows on board; milk, pies, puddings, and preserved fruits, by pots-full; sixty-four dozen of fowls, two hundred and eighty ducks, the long-boat full of Southdowns, and lots of salad growing in the cabin windows,”—the first experience of a too credulous listener being a basin of hot, salt, greasy, and weak soup,—and later ones involving the explanation that the cow had died of a decline at Portsmouth, and her place been filled by two goats, which, after purchase, turned out to be of the male species,—and so on, with other vanishing quantities and dissolving views in the catalogue of privileges.

Dennis Bulgruddery's excuses, in *John Bull*, for the negative state of the Red Cow cellars, have the charm of Irish vivacity; and even a saturnine guest might forgive his passing off sour beer for brandy—or rather instead of it, for he is ready with the landlord's trick of dating backwards, and can take his oath there was a big bottle of brandy in the house a week ago, but sorrow a drop left,—the mistress having a weakness that way. No such genial charm conciliates a guest towards the Jugby of *Time Works Wonders*, who is so much hurt when a cynical wayfarer declares of his wine that, drunk from a vinegar-cruet, it would pass without suspicion—for, “the heads of nobility stop here for that sherry”—and whose reply to a demand for venison is that there's none nearer than the park, and that's alive;—for a rump-steak, “Only one butcher, sir; and he doesn't kill till Saturday;”—for a broiled fowl, then, for surely he has plenty of fowls? “Dozens, sir; but just now they're all sitting.” What has he to offer for dinner, then? “I've some beautiful bacon, sir. Such pink and white. Streaked like a carnation.

cannot undertake to say, as he has not seen the work advertised yet; but he has no doubt, if it is likely to take, there will be copies in his next monthly parcel. “Mr. Pott's supplies are always in the *paullo-post-futurum* tense,” as Mr. Chatterly remarks.

Ladies of title come here to eat our bacon." A later arrival of hungry guests reduces Jugby to the apologetic avowal that—ahem!—"if some bread and cheese . . . People, sir, come twenty miles round for our bread and cheese." Later still, he suggests cake to the ladies who are clamorous for "some refreshment." Cake? is he laughing at them? Not at all. "Countesses from London stop here to eat our cake." Of course the ladies can have tea? Well, "We've a great name here for our tea. . . . But the Bishop of Kilcobby put up here yesterday, and the—the canister is out. If, however, you could be content with bread-and-milk—'tis an excellent thing to travel on." As to his ale,—can he recommend it? "Recommend it! The mail-cart comes six mile out of its way for our ale." But, after all, how light is the grievance of the guest who cannot get just what he asks for, compared with his who can get nothing at all. An empty purse may make this difference. Joshua Geddes is fain to put up with bread and cheese and ale, at Joe Crackenthorp's "public" on the banks of the Solway; but there sits watching the comfortable Quaker a hungry gazer in the form of Peter Peebles, who licks his parched lips as he sees Joshua masticate his crust, and who sucks up his thin chops as the other applies the tankard to his own mouth.* Michelet makes it a grievance against an English king in Paris in 1421, that a famished crowd of Parisians flocked daily to see royalty dine, to feast their eyes on the sumptuous banquet, and

* Compare the sufferings of Jerry's performing dogs, at supper-time, at the Jolly Sandboys—the terrible eagerness with which they watched the turning of the savoury contents of a caldron into a tureen, standing on their hind legs the while, and proof against various hot splashes which fell on their noses. One of the dogs is made to go entirely without supper, and is set on grinding the organ instead, which he does, sometimes in quick time, sometimes in slow time, but never leaving off for an instant. When the knives and forks rattled very much, or any of his fellows got an unusually large piece of fat, he accompanied the music with a short howl, but he immediately checked it on his master looking round, and applied himself with increased diligence to the Old Hundredth. —In some sort a companion picture might be made out of Mr. Squeers and the little boys at breakfast, at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill.

go away fasting. Hungry men are said, sometimes, as a lively writer observes, to lull the raging of their appetites by sniffing the hot, and, to some noses, fragrant breeze which exhales from between the gratings of an eating-house; while to some the mere contemplation of eel pies, smoking rounds of beef, rump-steak pies, and pennyworths of pudding, all ashine in the glory of dripping, and radiant with raisins, is almost as satisfying as the absolute possession of those dainties.* Other pages expatiate upon the "fairy-like realms of comestible beauty exhibited to hungry foot-passengers behind the plate-glass windows of Italian warehouses." A main episode in the epic of ragged vagrant little Bella's "exciting day," as narrated by Matthew Browne, is when the child watches from without the interior of a so-called Restaurant—nothing so much pleasing her to look at as the ices, for Bella had had a Penny Ice one day, and knew an ice when she saw one: "All girls are fond of ices, and especially pink ices, such as these ladies were eating, and Bella stood looking in at the door, with very large eyes and her mouth wide open," till one of the waiters came to the door and "hished" at her with a white napkin, as if she was a puppy-dog, and so she went

* It is a very pleasant mental condition, the essayist opines, the being able to stare a pastrycook's window out of countenance, and to feast, in imagination, upon the rich plum-cakes, the raspberry-tarts, and the lobster-patties; to walk up Regent Street, and wear, mentally, the ravishing bonnets and Burnouse cloaks and Llama shawls, which poverty forbids them on any other terms. It was thus Traddles and his young wife enjoyed themselves in the London streets after office-hours—looking into the glittering windows of the jewellers' shops, where he would show her which of the diamond-eyed serpents, coiled up in white satin rising grounds, he would give her if he could afford it; and she would show him which of the gold watches, capped, and jewelled, and engine-turned; and possessed of the horizontal lever-escape movement, she would buy for him, on the like hypothesis. "And we pick out the spoons and forks, fish-slices, butter-knives, and sugar-tongs, we should both prefer if we could afford it; and really we go away as if we had got them!" It was in another work, and in another mood, that Dickens pictured goldsmiths' treasures, guarded by one thin sheet of brittle glass from creatures with pale and pinched-up faces that hovered about the windows,—and so with half-naked shivering figures that stop to gaze at Chinese shawls and

away, ashamed and miserable and angry. She had but been doing, or essaying to do, what Larry O'Branigan, in Moore, writes home word of his doing in London, to his wife Judy, at Mullinafad :

“ Bein’ hungry, God help me, and happenin’ to stop,
Just to dine on the shmell of a pasthrycook’s shop.”

After a like sort Hawthorne imagines a hungry man to have been the painter of certain “saloon” pictures of edibles, by him described;—such as an oil-painting of a beef-steak, with such an admirable show of juicy tenderness, that the beholder sighed to think it merely visionary, and incapable of ever being put upon a gridiron,—and such, again, as the realistic representation of a noble sirloin, and of the hind-quarters of a deer (retaining the hoofs and tawny fur), and of the head and shoulders of a salmon, a brace of canvas-back ducks, a fine old cheese, in which you could almost discern the mites—and some sardines, on a small plate, very richly done, and looking as if oozy with the oil in which they had been smothered. Some very hungry painter Hawthorne supposes to have wrought these subjects of still life, heightening his imagination with his appetite, and earning, one would hope, the

golden stuffs of India. A Saturday Reviewer likens to the small boys who flatten their noses against pastrycooks’ windows, the crowd which gathers at a doorway to watch the exits and entrances of carriage company; and the comparison applies to other rapt gazers far and wide. We have Mrs. Whitney’s word for it, that the light, and the music, and the splendour, and the feasting, are greater to the beggar who peeps in from the street, than to him who sits at the revel. In one of her books there is a sketch of forlorn and ragged children clustering around the confectioners’ windows, and *looking*,—as if one sense would take in what was denied to another.

We see young Josquin Dorioz, the composer of an opera called (like Gluck’s) *Alceste*, and the hero of an art-novel bearing the same name,—on his arrival at the door of the Dresden opera-house, one summer evening, taking up his stand there because he has no money to enter with, and because it is the gate of his heaven; and there he watches the happy go in to feast on the heavenly strains, while he himself remains penniless and shut out. Within, to his imagination, there were “seraphim and cherubim, and harpers harping with their harps in divine concord, while he remained shut out.”

privilege of a daily dinner off whichever of his pictorial viands he liked best.

Homer, in the twentieth book of the *Odyssey*, has a telling simile of

“one who long with pale-eyed famine pined,
The savoury cates on glowing embers cast
Incessant turns, impatient for repast.”

To some poor (and because poor) mortals it is given to cast incessant gaze only, on such cates, whatever their impatience for the repast. Such are the gaunt gazers through the streaming and steaming panes of cookshop windows, what time the joints are fresh from the fire, and customers are crowding to the meal. Chateaubriand is free to own of his first sojourn in London, penniless and starving, when he used to chew grass and paper, failing other sustenance, that whenever he passed a baker's shop, his “torments were dreadful. One severe evening in winter, I stood for two hours riveted before a shop where dried fruit and smoked meats were sold, drinking in with my eyes all that I beheld. I could have eaten, not only the edibles, but the boxes, the baskets, and the panniers which contained them.” Dr. Gordon Hake, in one of his graphic little poems, tracks the wanderings of a small street-outcast, to his lingerings before houses where only a thin pane of glass divides him from the best and amplest of fare: he

“watches mouths that open wide,
And sees them eating through the glass.
Oft his own lips he opes and shuts;
With sympathy his fancy gluts.”

So too there is a scene in *Pendennis* where the windows of Sir Francis Clavering's dining-room are open to let in the fresh air, and afford to the passers-by in the street a pleasant, or, perhaps, tantalizing view of six gentlemen in white waist-coats, with a number of decanters and a variety of fruits before them: “little boys jumped up at the area-railings, and took a peep, saying one to another, ‘Mi hi, Jim, shouldn't you like to be there, and have a cut of that there pine-apple?’” But this is the funny side of the picture. Matter more serious

is that of Mrs. Browning's stanza, in her Song for Ragged Schools :

“Healthy children, with those blue
English eyes, fresh from their Maker,
Fierce and ravenous, staring through
At the brown loaves of the baker.”

One of Mr. Yates' best-known stories opens with the view of a pinched form, covered with a miserable tightly-drawn shawl,—the wearer a starving girl who, crossing Oxford Market on a rainy night, stops before the window of an eating-house, where “thick columns of steam were yet playing round the attenuated remains of joints, or casting a greasy halo round slabs of pudding. As the girl gazed at these wretched remnants of a wretched feast, she raised her head, her eyes glistened, her pinched nostrils dilated, and for an instant her breath came thick and fast ; then, drawing her shawl more tightly round her, . . . she hurried on.” Even so has Victor Hugo described Jehan Frolo pausing in the Rue de la Huchette, to sniff the odours of roasting joints, and to cast a sheep's eye at the culinary apparatus,—then, with a deep sigh, wending his way otherwards, for his pockets are as empty as his stomach. Another favourite fiction shows us a little child—a shoeless thing of three years old—in front of a window where the viands are all cheap and nasty, but the gazer is rapt in wistful contemplation of the coarse lumps and repulsive remnants that are steaming their last. Dear to Elia was the “touching but homely” stanza of a quaint poetess of his day, who in a previous stanza had described a poor boy snubbed for reading at a bookstall, and wishing he had never learnt to read :

“Of sufferings the poor have many,
Which never can the rich annoy.
I soon perceived another boy
Who looked as if he had not any
Food, for that day at least—enjoy
The sight of cold meat in a tavern larder.
This boy's case, then, thought I, is surely harder.
Thus hungry, longing, thus without a penny,
Beholding choice of dainty-dressed meat :
No wonder if he wish he ne'er had learnt to eat.”

Addison reminds us in the *Spectator* that it was usual for the priest, in old times, to feast upon the sacrifice, nay, the honey-cake, while the hungry lady looked upon him with great devotion; or as "the late Lord Rochester" describes it in a lively manner, "And while the priest did eat, the people stared." Founder's Day at Charterhouse has been made the text for feeling reference (perhaps by an old Carthusian) to the gown-boys in the gallery, who cannot resist the dreadful fascination of looking on with watering mouths at a dinner which others consume: they impend, head and wings, over the gallery, showing just like cherubs up aloft, and eye the barleysugar ship and the elegant but too fleeting forms in which the fancy of the architect in pastry loves to revel, as if they could, like the youth potted and planted by Canidia in the Epode, *inemori spectaculo*. Mr. Carlyle has a compassionating paragraph to spare on some hungry attaché of Tyrconnel's at Potsdam (A.D. 1752), shut out from the divine suppers and upper planetary movements, ("Tyrconnel gives splendid dinners,") and reduced to look on them from his cold hutch, in a dog-like angry and hungry manner.* Another graphic pen has sketched the sorrows of a hungry man at Lord's on a popular cricket day—envious at the sight of coarse-feeding coachmen swallowing Morel's pies and daintily contrived sandwiches, when they would far rather receive a shilling from the pocket of the hungry man and expend it on strong cheese and a rough onion; while it is equally distressing for him to see excellent cups with the "tender fragrance of lovage and the suspicion of liqueur" rolling down the throats of grooms and stable helps who would far rather have a quart of strong ale or some Dantzic spruce. The carriage-seat on a racecourse is a commonplace for fiction-mongers and essay-writers to associate a display of

* Contrast the same historian's account of Linsensbarth, the poor curate without cure, whom Old Fritz made so welcome at Potsdam a year or two previously. "Was there ever such a lucky Barmecide?" parenthetically asks Mr. Carlyle, as the Candidatus goes on describing his fare, from fish and roast game, to confectionery and big black cherries and pears, and all the rest of it.

lobsters, fowls, Perigord pie, mayonnaise, champagne cup, etc., with a throng of open-eyed outsiders, who "partake" of the feast in imagination. Such tricks hath strong imagination, of the sort cultivated by Don César de Bazan, when "pauvre, n'avant rien sous le dent," he pictured to himself

"une cuisine au soupirail ardent,
D'où la vapeur des mets aux narines me monte ;
Et, trompant l'estomac . . . j'ai l'odeur du festin," etc.

So with the Meditations at a Kitchen Window, of a ballad-monger of the day, who is inspired by the "taunting spirit of starvation," and watches a partridge gently wheeling round the spit, and hears the summons of "Dinner's ready," and in imagination joins the company—sets to work with heartfelt glee on callipash and callipee, victimizes venison pasty, flirts with jelly, custard, ice, like the Arab Ghoul with rice. "Day-dreams of imagination, could ye but repress starvation!" Balzac has pictured "un de ces Tantaies modernes qui vivent en marge de toutes les jouissances de leur siècle, un de ces avares sans trésor qui jouent une mise imaginaire." In one sense they play a losing game. The feats of imagination are wondrous, but there are reaches too far for even this expansive faculty. And one of them, on Bolingbroke's showing, is the impossible endeavour to

"cloy the hungry edge of appetite
By bare imagination of a feast."

§ II.

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS OF MISERY'S MAKING.

The Tempest, Act ii., Sc. 2.

IT is as a shipwrecked man, outcast on a desert island, and again overtaken by the stormy wind and tempest, that Trinculo is fain to creep for shelter under the gaberdine of Caliban's repulsive form—the form of a strange fish, a very strange fish, neither fish nor flesh (as human flesh goes), but with certainly a very ancient and fish-like smell exhaling from him. Despite

the smell, Trinculo is driven to seek a share of that gaberdine which covers the monster, and will help to cover *him*. Not the sort of bedding or bedfellow to be chosen, were the range of choice a little larger, and circumstances more favourable. But Trinculo can see no other shelter hereabout, and he is in misery, if not at the point to die ; and "misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows."

Even so was Lear, discrowned and houseless King Lear, on the night of the storm upon the heath, fain to hovel him with swine, and rogues forlorn, in short and musty straw.

When Dante is forewarned of the bitter experiences that await him in after-life—the experience of the bitterness of a dependent lot, "how salt the savour is of other's bread ; how hard the passage, to descend and climb by other's stairs ;"—this is made the bitterest of all, the enforced companionship with objects of his disgust and abhorrence :

" But that shall gall thee most,
Will be the vile and worthless company
With whom thou must be thrown into these straits."

Mr. Carlyle points the moral of his tale of Imperial Maria Theresa, constrained to court the good offices of the Pompadour, with the reflection : " Oh, high Imperial Soul, with what strange bedfellows does Misery of various kinds bring us acquainted ! " But the literal bedfellowship is our present theme. As in Hazlitt's instance of a reduced friend, whose complaint of the workhouse was, not that the fare was bad, or fire and clothing amiss, but that he was forced to lie three in a bed, and one of the three was out of his mind, and delighted of all things, when the other two fell asleep, to tweak their noses, and otherwise ingeniously maltreat them, so that they were obliged to lie awake, and hold him down between them. One should be quite mad to bear this, as Hazlitt said. Beside such a picture of indignity in reduced circumstances—a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* with a vengeance, there is little to make the flesh creep in such passages as we come upon in Washington's correspondence, about his lying down before the fire " upon a little hay, straw-fodder, or a bear-skin, with man, wife, and children, like dogs and cats." *With*

dogs, and cats too, in immediate proximity, might make matters worse. Honoré d'Urfé was literally "stunk out of bed" by his wife Diane's too numerous, too highly-favoured, and too highly-flavoured canine pets; and a separation came of it. As to cats, let grave John Evelyn furnish us with an illustration from his diary, what time he lay at the White Lion at Orleans, after a narrow escape from slaughterous highwaymen: "In the night a cat kitten'd on my bed, and left on it a young one having six ears, eight leggs, two bodys from the navil downwards, and two tayles. I found it dead, but warm, in the morning when I awaked." Miserable or not, Evelyn had then and there a strange bedfellow. The corpse of a new-born kitten, however, notwithstanding its abnormal organization, might to many tastes be less objectionable than a human* corpse. Experiences of the latter sort are recorded by General Sam Dale, the Mississippi Partisan; and in Lord Anson's *Voyage*, of one of his sailors who lay for several nights in the same hammock with his brother's corpse, in order to conceal his death, and so to receive the dead man's allowance of provisions.

To Bishop Hooper, peaking and pining for eighteen months

* A night with a *vile corpus* of the lower orders of our fellow-lodgers, *paulo post mortem*, is matter of frequent record in books of travel and adventure. Captain Drayson, for instance, tells of a hunter who fainted beside the leopard he had killed, and which had all but killed him first: all night he lay there in helpless pain, disquieted once or twice by a slight pressure against his shoulder, although he well knew his spotted foe to be out-and-out dead. In the morning he found that a puff-adder had crept close to him for the sake of the warmth. More than one strange bedfellow here. *Wild Sports in the South* gives us a queer story of a parson and a panther that got shut up together in a pig-pen on a dark winter night. "I've made the badger's hole my bed," is one of the misery-extorted avowals of that *miserable* of Crabbe's making, Sir Eustace Grey. Lord Holland's Spanish reminiscences comprised one of a man with a basket of vipers at an inn, who proclaimed their freshness and liveliness to the travellers who had to share his bedroom: at night one of these was awakened by feeling something cold passing over his face; and at the same moment the viper-vendor was heard to cry aloud in the dark, "My vipers have got loose; but lie still, gentlemen; let nobody stir; if only you do not move, you'll not be hurt."

and more in the Fleet Prison, the stillness of a dead companion would perhaps—within moderate limits—have been preferable to the “wicked man and wicked woman” with whom, after a time, his lot was cast, in a cell with a bed of straw and a rotten counterpane, the prison sink on one side and Fleet ditch on the other.

The reduced “gentility” that, before now, has had to put up with the night associates of a low lodging-house—say in a room so crammed with sleepers that (as one expert phrases it) their breaths in the dead of night, and in the unventilated chamber, rise “in one foul, choking steam of stench,”—may well lie awake, with a good deal to think of, none of it any too wholesome.* Other good things besides good manners—such as good temper, or good nature, for instance—must be corrupted by evil communications such as these.

When the travelled author of *Under the Sun* complained of the insect pests in his bedroom at El Globo, Havana, he was told that he might consider himself very lucky not to find in it such additional trifles as a cow† in one corner and a wheeled carriage in another. This he was slow to believe, and he adds that it was only later, after some wayside experiences in Andalusia, and having shared a room with a pedlar’s donkey, and being awakened in the morning by the “hard, dry see-saw of his horrible bray,” that he realized to a full extent the “strangeness of the bedfellows with which misery and a tee-totum existence make us acquainted.”

* Happier the outsider, even though out in the cold, after the manner of “Little Dorrit’s Party,”—when a Burial volume formed that young heroine’s pillow, and a snoring imbecile was her sole companion through the night: the shame, desertion, wretchedness, and exposure, of the great capital; the wet, the cold, the slow hours, and the swift clouds of the dismal night: this, we read, in the fourteenth chapter of her history, was the party from which Little Dorrit went home, jaded, in the first gray mist of a rainy morning.

† Gerard Eliassoen at the German inn complains of Christian men being forced to lie among cattle; and the old chamberman (not maid) replies, “Well, it is hard upon the poor beasts. They have scarce room to turn.” But the cow bed-mate that during the night eats up Gerard’s pillow (of hay), is far less objectionable than the drunken biped of another

Endless are the samples that might be offered of the liabilities (unlimited) and discomforts of bedfellowship in time of war. Such as the case of Spechbacher housed with cows for months together, and "covered up with cow-dung and fodder," when George Zoppel hid the wounded patriot from the Bavarian dragoons. Or again Sir Robert Wilson with the Russian army at Heilsberg, passing the night with old General Platow, who rested his venerable weight on the cramped as well as cabin'd, crib'd, confined Briton, while torrents of rain were falling, and both officers got slushed in the mire. Wet through, and with the dead weight of a drowsy and damp old Russian atop of him, Sir Robert was in a poor way that night.

One of the best-remembered passages in the experiences of Smollett's *Count Fathom* is where that hero takes shelter in a robber's hut, and is put by a withered beldame into a sleeping-room where he lights on the dead body, still warm, of a man who had lately been stabbed and put away under straw; and at least one modern critic admires the "intensity and power as of a tragic poet" with which are described Count Ferdinand's sensations during the night, and the sensational device by which he saves his life,—lifting up the dead body, and putting it in his own place in the bed, while he makes off through the forest, under the guidance of the aforesaid hag. Fiction also offers us the experiences of Christopher Staines on a raft, "alone, alone, all, all alone,

night's experience—at an inn where the bedrooms were upstairs dungeons with not a scrap of furniture except the bed, and a male servant settled inexorably who should sleep with whom: neither money nor prayers would get a man a bed to himself there: "You might as well have asked to monopolize a see-saw." But this again might almost be counted luxury in comparison with the lot of the convict in one of Dickens' short stories, who is chained to a Piedmontese burglar and manslayer, the touch of whose hand is horror to his companion: "How I sickened, if his breath came over me as we lay side by side at night. . . . When I needed rest, he would insist on walking: when my limbs were cramped, he would lie down obstinately, and refuse to stir. He delighted to sing blasphemous songs, and relate hideous stories," etc. The penalty of being a Siamese twin was but a degree or two worse than this, while it lasted.

alone on a wide wide sea," except for a corpse to bear him company : of his little namesake Tadpole, so "uncommon afeard of the body" upstairs, as his padrone explains : "I don't think he ever see one before ; and he had to sleep next it one night, when we was full ;"—and again, of Cripps, in *Dred*, who, "like coarse animal men generally, had a stupid and senseless horror of death," and therefore, on finding how near it was to him, "recoiled from the lifeless form, and sprang from the bed with an expression of horror." Edgar Huntley sleeps unawares on a dead Indian : "My head had reposed on the breast of him whom I had shot in this part of his body. . . . I started from this detestable pillow, and regained my feet." It is of the North American Indians that Chateaubriand is writing when he tells us how one tribe had a law for exposing the body of a slain man on a sort of hurdle (*claire*) in the air, while the slayer, fastened to a stake, was compelled "*à passer plusieurs jours à ce pilori de la mort.*" The *jours* include the *nuits* ; but the nights must have been the worst.

The climax of the "strange agony" of the wounded soldier, worked up by Coleridge in his picture of a battlefield, is when all foredone with toils and wounds, death-like he dozes among heaps of dead :

"The strife is o'er, the daylight fled,
And the night-wind clamours hoarse.
See ! the starting wretch's head
Lies pillow'd on a brother's corse !"

When the Roman general, Lucius, in *Cymbeline*, comes upon Fidele's form thus pillowed, he at once concludes that recumbent form to be dead, not sleeping—

"For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead."

§ III.

THE COLOUR TEST OF GUILT.

King Richard III., Act ii., Sc. 1 ; Othello, Act v., Sc. 1.

WITH Gloster, in presence of royal Edward and his queen, of Hastings, Rivers, Dorset, and Grey, "marked you not

"How that the guilty kindred of the queen

Look'd pale, when they did hear of Clarence' death?"

Presumed guilty, because turning pale,—the presumption is much in request. The colour test of guilt, judging by change of colour, may be a very shallow device, but is in some quarters, and to serve some purposes, an approved and accepted one,—enforced in season and out of season, with reason, and without it, or against it. At that same royal gathering, when the death of Clarence was discussed, "Look I so pale, Lord Dorset, as the rest?" had Buckingham asked; and the answer was, "Ay, my good lord; and no man in the presence But his red colour hath forsook his cheeks." It is for Gloster to draw or suggest his own damning conclusions. In an earlier historical play of the series, fear, not guilt, is presumed in a parallel instance; and this presumption too is scouted by those it concerns: "No, Plantagenet," is Somerset's protest, "'tis not for fear, but anger," etc. Elsewhere, again, it is another Gloster who, when suddenly arrested, tells Suffolk, "Thou shalt not see me blush, Nor change my countenance, for this arrest; A heart unspotted is not easily daunted." It is of Hubert, the presumed murderer of young Arthur, that Salisbury says, "O, he is bold, and blushes not at death." Iago is for pressing home the colour test of guilt against Cassio's mistress:

"Look you pale, mistress?"

Do you perceive the ghastness of her eye? . . .

Behold her well; I pray you, look upon her;

Do you see, gentlemen? nay, guiltiness will speak,

Though tongues were out of use."

Claudio is bitterly ironical at the expense of his repudiated bride, the much-wronged Hero:

“Behold, how like a maid she blushes here . . .
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue?”

But there is no irony in the more discerning friar's testimony in her favour, after he has marked “A thousand blushing apparitions start Into her face ; a thousand innocent shames In angel whiteness bear away those blushes.” *Heu ! quam difficile est crimen non prodere vultu !* To conscious integrity alone it is given, if we may cap Ovid with Horace, *nullâ PALLESCERE culpâ*. The Simo of Terence may be everybody's spokesman when he starts the note of interrogation, “Num ejus color pudoris signum usquam indicat ?” * Mute

* Juvenal hails the glowing cheek of youth as Nature's kindest boon to the youthful : “vultumque modestum Sanguine ferventem tribuat natura benignâ Larga manu,” etc. Micio, in the *Adelphi* of Terence, deems it to be all right with his adopted son when Æschinus reddens : *Ervubuit ; salva res est*. Is there not Menander's authority for such consolatory deductions ?—

Ἐρυθρίων πᾶς χρηστὸς εἰναι μοι δοκεῖ.

On such authority might the bitterest enemies of Bismark be constrained to regard the Chancellor-Prince as a most worthy man, if all be true that newspapers' Own Correspondents allege of his inveterate trick of blushing. Who would have thought there could be such a lack of brass where there is such a fund of the proverbial blood and iron ? Dr. Johnson, in the imaginary conversation with Horne Tooke, is made to redden—but it is with pleasure, at a compliment from his wily interlocutor, who triumphs in the feat : “I little expected to see, as I do, the finger of Aurora on your face”—a queer spot, that seamed, and furrowed, and forbidding visage, for ἡ ῥοδοδάκτυλος to light on. Leslie tells us of President West, addressing an assembly, that “the venerable man, when he began to speak, blushed like a young girl.” Lord Cockburn lays stress on the colouring propensities of two such hide-bound, smoke-dried lawyers as Rolland and Ross : the latter, Dean of the Faculty, “equalled his blushing brother Rolland in bashfulness,” and his “blushing cheeks and cunning eyes” figure prominently in the old judge's memorial sketch of “the little short body” in his little room in Queen Street. The Ettrick Shepherd pronounces Christopher North's look “quite captivatin', quite seducin', when you blush that gate, sir.” Long before, the same admirer had caught at Tickler's remark on North, “He blushes,” with the assenting and approving “That he does—and I like to see the ingenuous blush o' bashfu' modesty on a wrinkled cheek.” If we may take Mrs. Whitney's word for it, a sudden glow out of the eyes “is the way a strong man

confession is the subject of Barry Cornwall's picture of one whose lips are shut,—but that's no matter,—

“I want no words : thou dost confess it now.

There, on thy painted cheeks . . . the story's writ.”

But then it is so easy to read amiss. As Captain Marryat somewhere cautions us, the blush of honest indignation is as dark as the blush of guilt, and the paleness of concentrated courage as marked as that of fear. So in Shelley's apostrophe,

“O white innocence,
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide
Thine awful and serenest countenance
From those who know thee not !”

blushes ; and it means, with all the added force of the man's nature, what a woman means when she flushes like a rose.” However it may be with the strong man, poor creatures like Richard Hooker must resign themselves to unlimited liability to something over and above a sudden glow out of the eyes. *Him* “God and nature blessed,” as Izaak Walton words it, “with so blessed a bashfulness,” that a child could at once look him out of countenance. Sir Thomas Browne flushed at the slightest cause, or for none at all. The Anatomist of Melancholy speaks of *rusticus pudor*, flushing in the face, etc., as “common grievances, which much torture many melancholy men.” Is not even Ulysses liable,—as Pope renders a passage in the fourth book of the *Iliad*, where “the hero's warmth o'erspread his cheek with blushes”? Clarendon has no shame in telling in the fourteenth book of his *History* how “the Chancellor blushed very much ;” and in the second part of his *Life* he tells how Charles I. on one occasion observed Mr. Hyde “to be in Disorder, and to blush very much ;” while on another occasion it is the monarch who blushes, at losing a wager to Falkland. Rochester's tendency to blush won for him from Charles II. the title of Virgin Modesty. Pascal's complaisant *Père le Moine* would, no doubt, have been as ready to write for the debauched young earl as he did write for “Delphine,” an *Eloge de la pudeur*, “où il est montré que toutes les belles choses sont rouges, ou sujettes à rougir,”—a treatise designed to console the Delphine aforesaid, “de ce qu'elle rougissait souvent.” Mr. Carlyle forgets not to note of “our Friedrich Wilhelm,” in his younger days at least, that he is “much given to blush withal (which is a feature of him)” —nor are incidental instances wanting, in the course of that life-history. Plato makes Hippocrates blush when questioned by Socrates. Before Socrates, even Alcibiades blushed, and before him only. Charmides too is seen in the act, at a question started by that old man eloquent. There is nothing to surprise in Trelawny's account of Shelley as “gliding in, blushing like a girl,” at their first

On the other hand, there are self-possessed culprits of the temperament of Charles de Bernard's fine lady, when "*ses joues ne se colorèrent pas : il est des deuouements dont l'exaltation domine les vulgaires émotions de la pudeur.*" Another French novelist makes Anne of Austria deficient in those vulgar emotions, when cross-examined by her husband about her diamond studs: "The queen's paleness, if possible, increased; the king perceived it, and enjoyed it with that cold cruelty which was one of the worst sides of his character." Raoul colouring when similarly cross-questioned by Athos, deprecates the inference of inveracity: "I feel that I coloured, and in spite of myself. . . . I colour because I am agitated, not because I meditate a falsehood." Given an emotional temperament, and *tunc nec mens, nec color certa sede manet*; but the changes of colour may be egregiously misread. Webster's Vittoria Corombona can promise that if, in extremity, she look pale, it shall be for want of blood, not fear, while one of her assassins professes to be proud that Death cannot alter *his* complexion, for he shall never look pale. Plutarch

meeting; but there is in Sir George Beaumont's account of Canning, when these two first met, as absolutely blushing like any roseate girl of fifteen, although the statesman was already at the meridian of his fame, and should therefore, as De Quincey submits, have become *blasé* to the extremity of being absolutely seared and case-hardened against all impressions whatever appealing to his vanity or egotism. Many a master of arts in fiction has made a point of colouring his hero well. We see one of Mr. Charles Reade's crush his face into his two hands, round which his cheeks and neck "blushed red as blood," in the felt presence of two observant demoiselles. "Blush? they could see the colour rush like a wave to the very roots of his hair and the tips of his fingers." Mr. Hamilton, as the Baroness Tautphoeus pictures him, is "an inveterate blusher,"—of which propensity not a little is made in the opening chapters of *The Initials*. Colonel Hamley's Reverend Josiah, "like all nervous, studious men, had a sad trick of blushing"—and one occasion is on record upon which "the blush that overspread his face might be seen reappearing, from under his hair, on the bald part of his head, making it look so red that one might have fancied an Indian had scalped him." Add to these divers and diverse representative men the George Bertram of Mr. Anthony Trollope, "turning red in accordance with that inveterate and stupid habit of his." Nor be forgotten old Colonel Newcome when

tells us of philosophers, in their inquiries in the schools as to change of colour being an argument of cowardice, who made a point of citing the instance of Aratus, so brave and expert a commander, who yet was always subject to such facial fluctuations on the day of battle. Scott loved to watch and account for such changes on the face of beauty,—in the *Lay*, for instance, “the changeful hue of Margaret’s cheek; that lovely hue, which comes and flies, as awe and shame alternate rise.” In the *Lady of the Lake*, the hectic strife in Ellen’s face,

“Where death seem’d combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rush’d the throbbing blood;
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.”

Blushing means nothing, in some persons, Dr. Wendell Holmes can professionally assure us, while in others it betrays a profound inward agitation—a perturbation of the feelings far more trying than the passions which with many easily moved persons break forth in tears. He speaks of all

Rosey advanced and put that pretty fresh cheek of hers up to his grizzled moustache, and James Binnie chuckled, “I protest I don’t know which of you blushes the most,”—the truth being, on their author’s authority, that the old man and the young girl had both hung out those signals of amiable distress.

Once and again in Mr. Ticknor’s journals we light upon a masculine blush in unexpected quarters. The American in Paris in 1837, describes in Victor, Duc de Broglie, “who is above fifty,” a singular mixture of pride, warm-heartedness, and modesty, which “gives him a slight air of embarrassment, and makes him blush a little whenever he expresses a strong or decided opinion.” Next year the American is in London, and has a parallel passage to indite concerning Mr. Hallam, who, “about sixty years old,” “has a shy manner, which makes him blush, frequently, when he expresses as decided an opinion as his temperament constantly leads him to entertain.” Professor Playfair is another of the Old World worthies whom Mr. Ticknor professes to have caught in the act: “He has a childlike simplicity of manner, a modesty which will bring a blush on his cheek like that of a boy of fifteen.” This was written in 1819. And so was a like record of Walter Scott. Of later date is the “he blushes even,” alleged of “honest Althorp,” Earl Spencer. *Ora quoque ingenuo radiant suffusa rubore.*

who have observed much as being aware that some men, who have seen a good deal of life in its less chastened aspects, and are anything but modest, will blush often and easily, while there are delicate and sensitive women who can faint, or go into fits, if necessary, but are very rarely seen to betray their feelings in their cheeks, even when their expression shows that their inmost soul is blushing scarlet. The blush or the pallor, however, is more frequently misinterpreted to their prejudice, than the constitutional absence of either to their advantage. Gaze with Geraint on Enid, and watch them both :

“ With that he turn’d and look’d as keenly at her
As careful robins do the delver’s toil ;
And that within her, which a wanton fool,
Or hasty judger, would have call’d her guilt,
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.”

If not a wanton fool, at least a hasty judger, is he that passes judgment on Raimond’s aspect, in the *Vespers of Palermo* :

“ His unaltering cheek
Still vividly doth hold its natural hue,
And his eye quails not. Is this innocence ?—
No ! ’tis the unshrinking hardihood of crime.”

Eustace, in *Woman’s Wit*, employs the subject of that play’s title, when another Hero than Shakspeare’s is concerned :

“ Remember you no case
Where innocence accused hath all at once
Been stricken dumb ? * . . appearances against her,
And witness for her none, but her own heart ?
Her very blood betraying her, deserting
Its post upon her cheek, whence, were it bold
As honest, ’fore a host ’twould ne’er give way.”

In an earlier drama from the same pen, guilt is, not erroneously, imputed to one whose look betrays him : “ Thy blood is gone even from thy very lips, while all beside look as they looked

* Waverley, for instance, at Cairnvreckan, when the warrant against him was suddenly produced before the magistrates. “ The astonishment which Waverley expressed at this communication was imputed by Major Melville to conscious guilt, while Mr. Morton was rather disposed to construe it into the surprise of innocence unjustly suspected.”—ch. xxx.

before." Equally sound, for once, is Kit's appeal against Sampson Brass: "Look at him, gentlemen. See how he changes colour. Which of us looks the guilty person—he, or I?" On the other side is to be noted Miss Edgeworth's Monsieur Pasgrave when, trembling from head to foot, though innocent, he exhibited all the signs of guilt—"the pale, conscientious, incapacitated dancing-master," to whom the magistrate imputed guilt in default of colour; though it is also to be observed that when the real culprit is charged, upon *his* face too are seen "all the pallid marks of guilt."* Richardson's *Clarissa* is moved by a painful experience to pen the reflection that very many may, like herself, by blushing at an injurious charge, have been suspected, by those who cannot distinguish between the confusion which guilt will be attended with, and the noble consciousness that overspreads the face of a fine spirit, to be thought but capable of an imputed evil. One of Miss Broughton's high-coloured and high-colouring heroines—and yet it is not the one in *Red as a Rose*—would give ten years of her life for an unmoved complexion, when there is anything to move her, but it is of no use: struggle as she will against it, she feels that rush, that torrent of vivid scarlet, which, retiring, leaves her as white as her gown. "Oh! it is hard, that the lying changeableness of a deceitful skin should have power to work me such hurt." Her wan look sets her companion on proposing a glass of water. No, she thanks him, she is not at all faint. "But, alas! my words cannot undo what my false cheeks, with their meaningless red and their causeless white, have already done." In another chapter we read of her judiciously placing herself with her back to the light, so that if the exasperating flood of crimson bathe her face—and already she feels it creeping hotly up—

* Another student of human nature, commenting on the practised criminal's mastery of emotion as betrayed in words, tones, and even looks, denies that he can so rule the heart that the blood will not sometimes, and of a sudden, fly back to it in alarm; that subtle thing, whatever it is, that at times will send the warm stream of life rushing through every vein to the face, at others will cast it abruptly back to the deep well of the heart, —*will* do this, defiant of control.

it may be as little perceptible as possible. And in a later one still: "With a complexion that serves one such ill turns as mine does, one is not over-fond of *facing* people." Lord Lytton observes that in very young and sensitive persons, a great and sudden shock or revulsion of feeling reveals itself in the almost preternatural alteration of the countenance; not a mere paleness—a skin-deep loss of colour; but rather it is as if the whole bloom of youth had rushed away; the muscles fall as in mortal illness, and a havoc, as of years, seems wrought in a moment. Schiller's Joan of Arc, in the fourth act, is so stricken, and stricken dumb withal. "Horror and astonishment impede her utterance"—and in vain is she urged to confront her accuser and repel the charge: "Collect thyself, Johanna! innocence hath a triumphant look, whose lightning flash Strikes slander to the earth." But she can neither look up, nor speak, nor move. It is with her as with Hippolyte in Racine when so *accablé* by hideous charges "qu'ils m'ôtent la parole, et m'étouffent la voix." The author of *Leah* imagines that most innocent men or women would look to the full as guilty as really criminal ones in the first stunned moment of an unjust accusation; "guilty or innocent, the majority of human cheeks would certainly blanch—the majority of human nerves falter at such a moment." When Aurora Floyd first learnt the horrible charge that rumour preferred against her, she rose suddenly from her low seat, and turned her face to the light, with a look of such blank amazement, such utter wonder and bewilderment, that had her companion hitherto believed her guilty, he must thenceforth and for ever have been firmly convinced of her innocence. Caleb Williams appeals to the magistrate: "Mr. Forester,—you are a man of penetration: look at me; do you see any of the marks of guilt?" On the other hand, Roderick Random's friend, Mr. Jackson, is so much abashed at certain remarks from the bench that he "changed colours, and remained speechless"—which confusion his worship accepted at once as a symptom of guilt. Rousseau had ample ground for arguing "*combien sont trompeurs les jugemens fondés sur l'apparence, auxquels le vulgaire*

donne tant de poids, et combien souvent l'audace et la fierté sont du côté du coupable, la honte et l'embarras du côté de l'innocent." As an essayist on social subjects has remarked, the proud bearing of conscious innocence can hardly be sustained by ordinary men under the eyes of a suspecting and condemning multitude—so strange a power have the majority of thinking of themselves as others think of them. Much nonsense, it is allowed, has been written about the boldness of innocence. Unless gifted, as a late writer urged, with excellent nerves and muscles, unless favoured with favourable opportunity, and unless confronted with no very overwhelming adversary, Innocence is possibly the greatest coward living.

§ IV.

DENTAL DEMONSTRATION.

Love's Labour's Lost, Act v., Sc. 2.

BIRON has no mercy on Boyet. He cuts him up with the trenchant gusto of a professional carver. Conscious of his power of sarcasm, he delights to exercise it on so inviting a subject. Boyet, as satirized by Biron, is a mincing courtier, who pecks up wit, as pigeons peas, and retails it pedlar-fashion wherever it is in demand; he can carve too, and lisp; he has kissed away his hand in courtesy; he is "the ape of form, monsieur the nice;" playing at tables he chides the dice in honourable terms; he sings tenor, after a sort; and as for ushering, why, as gentleman-usher, mend him who can. The ladies call him sweet,

"And consciences, that will not die in debt,
Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet."

The portraiture at large reads like one of the characters of Overbury done into rhyme. But there is one detail of aspect and character that Overbury would scarcely have missed, and that we have only reserved to the last; and that is, Boyet's

addictedness to dental demonstration,—if indeed ostentation be not a better word for it :

“ This is the flower that smiles on every one,
To shōw his teeth as white as whalès' bone.”

Saunderson, the blind Professor of Mathematics, is said, once in company, to have rightly guessed that a lady present had beautiful teeth ; else, he remarked, she would not laugh so often. Says the Colonel to Miss, when she laughs, in Swift's *Polite Conversation*, “ What, miss ! you can't laugh but you must show your teeth.” What refinement, and what limitations, the teeth betray ! exclaims Mr. Emerson, in an essay on the Conduct of Life. “ Beware you don't laugh,” said the wise mother, “ for then you show all your faults.” Dr. Holmes somewhere observes that people who have one showy point are apt to betray their favouritism,—especially dentists with handsome teeth, who always smile back to their last molars. Victor Hugo's Paquette,—poor girl, what beautiful teeth she had, and how she would laugh that she might show them ! “ But a girl that laughs a great deal is in the way to cry ; fine teeth spoil fine eyes ”—and so La Chantefleurie found it. The Lady Mason of Mr. Trollope's painting had a mouth that was very regular, and her teeth were perfectly beautiful, but her lips were straight and thin : it would sometimes seem that she was all teeth, and yet it is certain that she never made an effort to show them. His Miss Van Siever, in a later work, had teeth that were “ perfect—too perfect—looking like miniature walls of carved ivory. She knew the fault of this perfection, and showed her teeth as little as she could.” The D'Artagnan of Dumas greets Colbert with a laugh which disclosed to the minister thirty-two magnificent teeth, all of them seemingly ready to devour,—though the adventurous Gascon is not to be thought of in connexion with Hood's picture of

“ a horrible mouth, of such extent,
From flapping ear to ear it went,
And show'd such tusks whenever it smiled—
The very mouth to devour a child.”

Mr. Carker's set better answers that description. Molière

might have had *him* in view prospective, or foresight, when he penned the lines, suggestively feline,—

“belles dents, et des propos fort doux,
Mais, comme je vous dis, la griffe est là-dessous.”

The impersonation of puss is as patent here as in Mr. Dombey's manager. In one of Washington Irving's letters there is a description of the once popular prima donna Parodi, which endows her with “a countenance very expressive, in spite of her teeth, which are a little of the ‘Carker’ order.” Our earliest introduction to Mr. Carker is to a gentleman “with two unbroken rows of glistening teeth,” the regularity and whiteness of which were quite distressing: it was impossible to escape the observation of them, for he showed them whenever he spoke, the width of his wide smile rarely extending, however, beyond the mouth. Chapter after chapter renews our familiarity with, and strengthens our distrust of, that false mouth, ever on the stretch, but never laughing. We see the man “expanding his mouth, as if it were made of India-rubber.” We see him “grinning like a shark.” We see him “bending his brows, without showing his teeth any the less.” And we see casual gazers standing “amazed at the beauty of his teeth, and at his brilliant smile; and as he rode away, the people took him for a dentist, such was the dazzling show he made.” There is in one of Mr. Gilbert's stories a solicitor whose teeth were strongly against the chance of his being an honest man, for they were “beautifully white and regular,” and he was fond of showing them. What connexion there exists between the whiteness of the teeth and the cunningness of the heart one of his reviewers could not pretend to say; but that there is a connexion the critic unhesitatingly affirms after a long course of novel-reading—be the case one of “correlated variation,” or whatever else it may.

There is that James Conyers, for instance, who would not have gone three paces out of his way to serve his best friend, but who smiled and showed his handsome white teeth with equal liberality to all his acquaintance, and took credit for being a frank, generous-hearted fellow on the strength of that smile. We might apply to him in this respect what is told

of him in another, that he was "dexterous in the handling of those cogged dice which have all the rattle of the honest ivories." To the same authorship is to be assigned that villanous adventurer of a dentist, Philip Sheldon, whose strong point was his teeth, the perfection of which were a fine advertisement, professionally considered, albeit the teeth were rather too large and square for a painter's or a poet's notion of beauty, and were apt to suggest an unpleasant image of some sleek brindled creature crunching human bones in an Indian jungle. But their "flashing whiteness" told on the unwary,—was made to tell, that is to pay. Mr. Charles Reade somewhere speaks of "the winning smile that comes of tusk in man or beast." But there is a dental demonstration like that Judge Haliburton describes in a fellow who "grinned so, he showed his corn-crackers from ear to ear*—he stripped his teeth like a catamount, he looked so all mouth." The degenerate Robert Bruce (degraded into a sordid shopkeeper) of one of Mr. George Macdonald's fictions is to be seen "grinning a smileless grin from ear to ear, like the steel clasp of a purse." Theodore Hook's Noel is ever and anon to be seen "smiling to show at once his temper and his teeth." When the same author's Man of many Friends asserts his liking for a certain Countess, because she is good-natured, one of his many friends (himself not too good-natured) declares the good-nature to arise from her ladyship's good set of teeth: "If ever you want laughers to make up a party, study the ivory. Be sure your guests have good teeth, and they'll laugh at the worst story of a dinner-going wit, rather than not show the 'white and even.'" What do the graduates in the School for Scandal think of Miss Simper? asks Mrs. Candour. Sir Benjamin opines that Miss has very pretty teeth. "Yes," assents Lady Teazle; "and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a-jar, as it were—thus. (*Shows her teeth.*)" The Amarella of Edmond About's

* So with Scott's Grigg the Grinner, in *Nigel*, who showed all his teeth from ear to ear, as if he were grimacing through a horse-collar.

Tolla "had a way of pretending to be highly amused, when she did not exactly know what to say, and wished to show her teeth." Theganus makes it a mark-worthy and praiseworthy characteristic of Louis le Debonnaire, in this respect resembling St. Louis, that even at festive gatherings, and when privileged jesters were setting and keeping the table in a roar, the emperor not even smiled so as to show his white teeth.

To his Sicilian wayfarer at the Wayside Inn, Longfellow ascribes a face like a summer night, all flooded with a dusky light ;

"his teeth shone white
As sea-shells, when he smiled or spoke" *—

and smiling and speaking come natural to one thus physically gifted. Readers of *Jacob Faithful* may remember the sea-captain whose "capacious mouth was furnished with the most splendid row of teeth that I ever beheld,"—and his manner of showing them. Mrs. Gore's readers, if there be any left, may recall that plausible, silver-tongued, middle-aged tuft-hunter, Mr. Russell, whose white teeth were so very much at the service of any peer who condescended to be witty. We see him in the dread presence of a certain Lady Maria, as he stands bowing and displaying to her, from an awful distance, the double range of his pearly teeth.† But the day comes when, as Count Russell, he dandifies his grizzled head under a Brutus wig, and unintelligibly murmurs his sugared compliments through the "interstices of several of those ivory teeth which formed his best patrimony, but which have paid the debt of nature." Aramis has the advantage of Madame de Chevreuse, and maliciously he profits by it, when he fixes a long, ironical look upon her faded face, especially upon the

* In a minor poem from the same pen we have Othere the old sea-captain staring wild and weird, then smiling,

"till his shining teeth
Gleam'd white from underneath
His tawny quivering beard."

† "Even his teeth, and white like a young flock
Coeval, newly shorn, from the clear brook
Recent, and blanching on the sunny rock."

PRIOR'S *Solomon*, Book ii.

lips she keeps carefully closed over her blackened and scanty teeth : as he coolly gazes, he cruelly smiles, so as to reveal his teeth ; for *his* are still brilliant and dazzling. Monte Christo's count, too, is dentally demonstrative—ever and anon “laughing with that singular laugh, which displayed his sharp white teeth.” Thackeray's Dr. Firmin had very white false teeth, which “grinned in the gaslight very fiercely”—his stereotyped smile being a very queer contortion of the handsome features : he drew his lips over his teeth, causing his jaws to wrinkle (or dimple if you will) on either side. Mr. Trollope's Blanche Robarts (unlike Lucy, whose small pearls of teeth were so seldom seen) was noted for teeth as white and regular and lofty as a new row of houses in a French city ; but then when she laughed she was all teeth. Elia the essayist was by theory obdurate to the seductiveness of what are called a fine set of teeth. Every pair of rosy lips he would readily presume to be a casket holding such jewels ; but he ventured to counsel the fair owners to “air” them as frugally as possible. “The fine lady, or fine gentleman, who show me their teeth, show me bones.” Yet was Elia fain to confess that from the mouth of a true sweep (as sweeps were in those days) a display, even to ostentation, of those white and shining ossifications, struck him as an agreeable anomaly in manners, and an allowable piece of foppery. It was to him like some remnant of gentry not quite extinct ; or as when

“A sable cloud
Turns forth her silver lining on the night.”

§ V.

*A ROPE FOR THE DROWNING; OR, RESERVED FOR THE
HANGMAN.*

The Tempest, Act i., Sc. 1.

THE bluff boatswain, when his ship is going down in the *Tempest*, cares as little as the roaring waves for the name of king, when reminded that the King of Naples is aboard, to

say nothing of his son Ferdinand, his brother Sebastian, Antonio Duke of Milan, and the lords in attendance. Are they not all going down together? He has no patience to be reasoned with or talked to. Talkers and reasoners are only an obstacle to the working the ship. Away with them and their impertinent babble. "You mar our labour; keep your cabins; you do assist the storm. . . . Hence! To cabin: silence! trouble us not." The outspoken rudeness of the mariners vexes the soul of honest old Gonzalo, Counsellor of Naples, who can be outspoken too, on occasion; and the courtier seeks comfort in the persuasion that such a rascal as this must be foredoomed to the gallows, and that so the good ship will escape wreck after all. Can a man fear God, who so little honours the King? And is not a man who is destitute of either that fear or that honour, a sheer reprobate, marked out for the hangman in due time? Courage, then! The ship will hardly go down, with such a gallows-bird in it; and if the boatswain shall escape drowning, because he deserves hanging, surely the royal party will get safe to land, with other deserts, and for other ends.

"*Gonzalo.* I have great comfort from this fellow: methinks he hath no drowning mark upon him; his complexion is perfect gallows. Stand fast, good fate, to his hanging! make the rope of his destiny our cable, for our own doth little advantage! If he be not born to be hanged, our case is miserable."

There is no love lost between the pair, and when they meet again, it is again to exchange compliments equally internecine. "I'll warrant him from drowning," Gonzalo reiterates, "though the ship were no stronger than a nutshell." And later yet, after the ship's crew have rushed on, drenched and despairing, with the cry of "All lost! to prayers, to prayers! all lost!" the old statesman cannot resist from baiting anew that obnoxious boatswain, the black beast of his black books:

"He'll be hang'd yet:
Though every drop of water swear against it,
And gape at widest to glut him."

There is an exultant chuckle on the veteran minister's

part, in the fifth act, when the wrecked company are one by one, and two and three together, recovered and restored, not without bewilderment on their part, and when among the rest the boatswain is "amazedly" (or all in a maze) led on by Ariel. "O look, sir, look, sir; here are more of us!" cries Gonzalo to the king: "I prophesied, if a gallows were on land, This fellow could not drown." A sorry reception ashore for the dazed and drenched sailor; and in tone not unlike the conclusion of the barbarous people of the island called Melita, who at first indeed showed a shipwrecked apostle no little kindness, but presently spoke of him as beyond doubt a foredoomed criminal, whom, though he had escaped the sea, yet vengeance would suffer not to live.

The cynical saw has other instances in Shakspeare to set its teeth on. One of the two gentlemen of Verona, Sir Proteus, banteringly dismisses the other one's varlet with the promise of Gonzalo to the Neapolitan boatswain:

"Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wreck;
Which cannot perish, having thee aboard,
Being destined to a drier death on shore."

Bardolph prognosticates the like fate for Falstaff's page, considering the company he serves and the examples he sees: "An you do not make him hanged among you, the gallows shall have wrong." More pious in form was the deprecation touching his son and heir, the future Frederick the Great, by that stern and sturdy sire of his: "God grant it do not come true," deprecated the almost imprecating king,—"but my son won't die a natural death; God grant he do not come into the hangman's hands yet!" We are reminded, with a difference, of Vespasian affecting the diviner, and once, when the young Domitian expressed apprehension of some mushrooms at table, telling him to have no such fears, for he was doomed to perish by cold steel, not poison. It was after a double escape, in the course of his Highland wanderings, in perils by waters, and in perils on land, that Prince Charles Edward uttered the exultant exclamation, that he believed himself not designed to die by either weapon or water.

In illustration of what has been called the demoralizing reflection that many naughty boys have become famous admirals, a biographer of De Ruyter quotes the answer of a friend to the mother's objection that her son would be drowned if sent to sea—and as frequent whippings had failed to reform the ne'er-do-weel little Dutchman, to be sent to sea was his doom,—“Better drowned than hanged.” The candid friend evidently saw no alternative.

Dean Ramsay supplies a naïve practical application, during the anxiety and alarm of a storm, of the Scottish proverb, “The water will never warr [outrun] the widdie,” *i. e.*, never cheat the gallows. One of the passengers, a simple-minded minister, was sharing the affright that was felt around him, until, spying one of his parishioners, of whose ignominious end he had long felt persuaded, he uttered a joyous note of recognition and gratitude, “O, we are all safe now,”—and accordingly accosted the gallows-bird presumptive with strong assurances of the great pleasure he had in seeing him on board. As Stressi mutters in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*,—

“If honest men, now, had been in the ship,
It had gone down with every soul on board :—
Some folks are proof 'gainst fire and water both.”

Mat Prior made his own self-application of the adage :

“Fierce robbers there are that infest the highway,
So Mat may be killed, and his bones never found ;
False witness at court, and fierce tempests at sea,
So Mat may yet chance to be hanged, or be drowned.”

The proverb was just of the kind to please Dean Swift, and to afford him capital for compound interest in allusion and illustration. Of course it occurs in *Polite Conversation*, where Miss owns to her promise to go this evening to Hyde Park on the water, but now protests she is half afraid. “Never fear, miss,” replies Tom Neverout : “you have the old proverb on your side, Naught's ne'er in danger.” Whereupon the Colonel shrewdly suggests, “Why, miss, let Tom Neverout wait on you, and then, I warrant, you'll be as safe as a thief in a mill ; for you know, he that's born

to be hanged will never be drowned." In several of the Drapier's Letters the adage is turned to sinister account. Poor Mr. William Wood the patentee is assured of a dry death; and if reiterations can make assurance doubly sure, doubly sure is he of the gallows for his *terminus ad quem*. He is made to avow, in one of his letters, that his wife had always thought his name ominous; and that, in consequence of her suspicious words, he had often in imagination believed himself at the gallows, with the knot under his ear, and ready to be turned off.* "While there was water between me and my accusation, I thought myself pretty secure," he writes, further on; but now his visions are of "a cart, I am afraid, travelling to Tyburn." One correspondent promises him a fine cravat, for the good of Ireland's hempen manufacture. Another has got hold of Mistress Wood's prophetic play upon words, and longs to see him expiate his offences on his namesake. Not Gonzalo with the boatswain could harp more pertinaciously on that one string—with the making of a rope in it—than the Dublin Drapier does at the cost of copper-coining W. W.

Everybody declared of The. Cibber—Colley's scamp of a son Theophilus—that he was born to be hanged. But The. took everybody in, (a habit of his,) by being drowned instead.

Leigh Hunt, in one chapter of his Autobiography, has to relate a narrow escape he once had from drowning, while boating in Iffley Reach, and he duly recites the various sensations he then experienced, and the rush of reflections that occupied his mind,—this one inclusive: that he was about to contradict the proverb which says that a man who

Had Will Wood, brazier, been a student of Molière, he might have been uncomfortably reminded of a scene between Sganarelle and his wife, where Martine exclaims, "Quoi! mon mari pendu! Hélas, mon cher mari, est-il bien vrai qu'on te va pendre?" And when, after some curt answers to her sharp questionings, the *malgré lui* médecin bids her be off, her conjugal attachment (after a sort) overcomes her conjugal obedience, and she rejoins:

"Non, je veux demeurer pour t'encourager à la mort; et je ne te quitterai point que je ne t'aie vu pendu."—*Le Médecin malgré lui*, Acte iii., Sc. ix.

was born to be hanged, would never be drowned ; for the sail-line, in which he felt entangled, seemed destined to perform for him both the offices.*

The pettifogger in Fielding, who declares one of Tom Jones's parents to have been a fellow that was hanged for horse-stealing, goes on to assert of Tom himself, that he was dropped as an infant at Squire Allworthy's door, where one of the servants found him in a box, "so full of rain-water, that he would certainly have been drowned had he not been reserved for another fate." "Ay, ay, you need not mention it, I protest ; we understand what that fate is very well," cries Dowling, with a facetious grin.

Being among the novelists again, suppose we stand with Lewis the Eleventh and Tristan l'Hermite on the banks of the Cher, as Quentin Durward essays to cross the ford, when the water is up : "He is a lost man," exclaims Tristan, proposing to stay him from the attempt in time, for the ford is impassable. "Let him make that discovery himself, gossip," quoth the king : "it may, perchance, save a rope, and break a proverb." Presently however it is seen to be another man than Lewis had imagined, and the royal command now is to aid the imperilled swimmer, though once and again the king reverts to his pet proverb : "If old saws speak truth, water will not drown him"—and, when a safe landing has been effected, "I knew water could never drown that young fellow."—In *The Abbot*, when Master Wingate expatiates on the Lady of Avenel's fondness for

* Miss Mitford, in one of her letters, piques herself on having safely and pleasantly accomplished a pony-carriage drive, with a companion of a seemingly quizzical turn : "Miss James says she was not at all afraid, being so assured of my being reserved to be hanged, that she would not mind going with me even in a balloon."—*Letters of Mary Russell Mitford*, ii. 29.

The Dean who gets dipped, and comes out dripping, in *Wheat and Tares*, has a like good-natured friend, who pooh-poohs the exclamation, "By Jove, I thought he'd be drowned," with the reassuring assurance, "Oh, he's not for drowning, you may depend on it ; his constellation is not a watery one."—(Chapter xvi.)

the lad Roland Graeme, whom she was the cause of "being saved (more's the pity) from drowning,"—"I would have been his caution for a gray groat, against salt water or fresh," says Roland's adversary, Adam Woodcock the falconer; "marry, if he crack not a rope for stabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again." In a like spirit Colonel Talbot, in *Waverley*, exclaims touching the Highland chieftain's footboy found dead on Clifton Moor, "Then that little limb of the devil has cheated the gallows, for cut-throat was written on his face."—When Maggie Tulliver is missing, and a terrified search for her is instituted, and her mother is hard to be persuaded the child is not in the pond, Mrs. Pullet "observed that the child might come to a worse end if she lived—there was no knowing." Guilty Jonas Chuzzlewit, aloft on the lumbering slow night-coach, asks the guard what he is staring at? "Not at a handsome man," returned the guard: "if you want your fortune told, I'll tell you a bit of it. You won't be drowned. That's a consolation for you." Rogue Riderhood has a triumphant way of asserting that it's well known of him, he can't be drowned. *His* reason for the assertion is, that he has been brought out of drowning. Other folks agree with him in his main proposition, without accepting his logic; one cynic even inquiring when he means to get ready to be hanged. But Riderhood not a bit the less exults in his assured immunity from a wet death. No such exultation characterizes the strain of the Ingoldsby reprobate:

"Thou saw'st me on that fearful day,
When, fruitless all attempts to save,
Our pinnace foundering in the bay,
The boat's-crew met a watery grave,—
All, all—save *one*—the ravenous sea,
That swallow'd all—rejected *me*!"

CHAPTER VII.

§ I.

POLONIUS.

CLARENDON remarks in the seventh book of his great history, that there are many men who in some one particular argument may be unskilful, in another affected, and may seem to have levity, or vanity, or pedantic formality, in ordinary and cursory conversation, (which, by the way, he deems "a very crooked rule to measure any man's abilities, as giving a better measure of the humour than of the understanding,") who, nevertheless, in regular and responsible "counsels, deliberations, and transactions," are men of great insight and wisdom, and from whom excellent assistance may be counted upon, for state purposes, and to do the state some service. To Polonius a good deal of this will apply. The shallow fallacy has long been exploded which made of him a drivelling dotard, an addle-pated old ninny, merely and purely the great baby that Hamlet pictured him, not yet out of his swaddling-clouts. There are men of no remarkable abilities or requirements who attain position and influence and the deference due to wisdom, solely by the discreetness of their lives, the grave courtliness of their bearing, their composed and collected manner, and the polished preciseness of their speech, which approaches pomposity, but still stops short of it. Polonius is cited by Mr. R. G. White as an approximation to this type,—“Shakspeare's acute and high-bred courtier,” *bien entendu*, “not the jack-a-dandy of the stage,”—but he has too much affectation of subtle thought in his conversation. Hartley Coleridge likens him to an emeritus professor of legerdemain, who continues to repeat his sleight-of-hand tricks when gout or palsy has deprived his hands of the

quickness necessary to deceive. "He is a formalist in politics, a precisian in courtesy." The same critic considers the character of Polonius, though far less abstruse and profound than that of Hamlet, to have been far more grossly misrepresented—at least on the stage—where he has been commonly exposed to the "gods" as a mere doodle, a drivelling caricature of methodical, prying, garrulous, blear-eyed, avaricious dotage; in fact, as all that Hamlet, between real and counterfeit madness, describes him. The Danish Chamberlain is confessedly superannuated—a venerable ruin, haunted with the spectre of his departed abilities. Of Polonius in his prime it might be said, that "wisdom and cunning had their shares in him;" his honour and honesty were of the courtier's measure, more of the serpent than the dove. "A cautious wisdom, never supported by high, philosophic principles, has degenerated into circuitous craftiness. Witness his notable scheme of espionage upon his son's morals at Paris." He is to be noted, moreover, as a member of the Academy of Compliments, a master of ceremonies, and evidently practised in the composition of set speeches and addresses, as his rhetorical formulæ and verbal criticisms sufficiently evince: "A foolish figure"—"A vile phrase"—"Beautified is an ill phrase"—"That's good, mobled queen is good." It would seem, too, that like some other great statesmen, he has dabbled in polite literature, so correctly he inventories the genera and species of the Drama—Tragedy, Comedy, Pastoral, Pastoral-comical, Historical-pastoral, Tragical-historical, Tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, Scene-undividable, or Poem-unlimited. How would Goethe, himself an expert in stage-management as well as a poet of genius and a critic of rare culture, have Polonius represented on the boards? His own Serlo is his mouthpiece in this matter. He would essay "to represent a very worthy man in a favourable light"—to portray his various characteristics in a becoming manner, his repose and confidence, his emptiness and self-importance, his pliancy and meanness, his candour and sycophancy, his sincere roguery and deceptive truth. He would paint this "gray-headed, time-serving, and patient old rogue" in the most courtly

colours. "I will speak like a book where I am prepared, and like a simpleton when I am in good spirits. I shall be absurd enough to coincide with every one, and clever enough never to notice when I am turned into ridicule." Tieck, on the other hand, however intimately associated with Goethe's school, not contented with trying to repel the obsolete idea of Polonius being a mere buffoon, was for exalting him into a most profound, respected, and able statesman. True, Polonius may have been, as Professor Moir allowed in his strictures on Tieck, a very excellent privy counsellor in his day—though even then no Solomon—but he is evidently "passé;" he draws on his memory, not his judgment, for his wise saws and excellent advices to his son and daughter, which no one can doubt he is now delivering for the thousand and first time.*

Now, as one of the most acute analysts of the character of Hamlet has argued, between such a personage as this pragmatical, positive old precisian, and the moody, metaphysical, impatient, open-hearted Prince, there must needs have existed an utter antipathy; and though antipathy is not synonymous with hatred, it is on the highway to it; where natures are entirely discordant, small provocation suffices to produce personal hostility. As the confidential agent and adviser of the usurping king, Polonius may be supposed to have had a hand in diverting the course of succession. As Ophelia's father, he has enjoined her to deny her company to Hamlet—"prudently enough, no doubt, but paternal prudence seldom escapes the resentment of the disappointed lover." That the Danish Prince imputes to sordid and unworthy designs the plainest dictates of parental duty on the old man's part, Hartley Coleridge infers from the ambiguous epithet "fish-monger," from the ironical admonition, "let her not walk i' the sun," etc. But above all, Polonius betrays his intention of pumping Hamlet; and the irritation naturally consequent on

* For a Prime Minister to have at command an ample supply of shrewd saws, was a recommendation in the Elizabethan age. Historians tell us that Burghley had a store of pithy apophthegms, for which he knew he could always find sympathy in the Queen's breast.

the discovery of such a purpose, is heightened by contempt for the "manœuvring imbecility," the "tedious periphrasis" with which it is pursued, which "renders age contemptible for its weakness, and odious for its indirection." It is deemed, therefore, not unnatural, though certainly far from proper, that Hamlet should make the infirmities of the venerable lord a topic of reproach and ridicule; and that when, in a feverish flash of vigour, he has stabbed him like a rat behind the arras, he should vent his just anger against himself upon the victim of his rashness, whom he chooses to consider as the impediment to his just revenge; and, unable to speak seriously on what he cannot bear to think of, should continue to the carcase the same strain of scornful irony with which he used to throw dust in the dim prying eyes of the living counsellor. This situation is said by Franz Horn to embody one of the profoundest tragic epigrams which ever poet devised. "The poor half-honest, half-prudent, half-witty, half-foolish old man, so in love as it were with life, might have plausibly calculated on some ten or twenty years longer of existence; and now in a moment he is hurried off, entangled in his own intrigues, detected in the 'honourable' employment of listening—an undertaking which he had volunteered merely to draw some fresh complimentary phrase from the flattering king;" while again, in regard to Hamlet, the most energetic moment of his life is lost—since he accomplishes nothing by the only *action* to which he rouses himself but a miserable murder, a crime which is only productive of farther misery. "He wishes to hurl the cruel usurper from his throne; and at this moment he might have done so, for he has for the first time screwed his courage to the sticking-point; but a ruthless fate mocks the waverer; and he wastes the whole fulness of his strength in killing—a fly, which he might have swept away with his pocket-handkerchief." Is it the king? Ah, no; there is no such rat behind the arras, dead, for a ducat, dead! It is Polonius the prince has pinked, and now pulls forth from his hiding.

"Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better."

The king's reflection upon the "heavy deed" is quite correct, "It had been so with us, had we been there"—a reflection suggested by Gertrude's sorrowful version of the story, how Hamlet, "in his lawless fit, .

"Behind the arras hearing something stir,
Whips out his rapier, cries *A rat! a rat!*
And, in his brainish apprehension, kills
The unseen good old man."

Although it was natural, argues Coleridge, that Hamlet, a young man of fire and genius, detesting formality, and disliking Polonius on political grounds, as imagining that he had assisted his uncle in his usurpation, should express himself satirically, yet this must not be taken as exactly the poet's conception of him. "Shakspeare never intended to exhibit him as a buffoon." He is the "personified memory of wisdom no longer actually possessed." Take his advice to Laertes,* and Ophelia's reverence for his memory, and we shall see, said Coleridge, that he was meant to be represented as a statesman somewhat past his faculties,—his recollections of life all full of wisdom, and showing a knowledge of human nature, while he is weak with regard to what immediately takes place before him. What can be put down by rule in the memory, after the fine address of a statesman's prime is gone, may easily appear to us as mere poring, maudlin, cunning,—"slyness blinking through the watery eye of superannuation." Polonius is the "skeleton of his own former skill and statecraft," and we see him hunting the trail of policy "at a dead scent, supplied by the weak fever-smell in his own nostrils." But, in the main, it is to Hamlet that Polonius is meant to be contemptible, because in inwardness and uncontrollable

* Referring to Bacon as England's one writer of apophthegms of the first order, Mr. John Morley, in his essay on Vauvenargues, pronounces the difference between Bacon as a moralist and Pascal or Vauvenargues, to be the difference between Polonius's discourse to Laertes and the soliloquy of Hamlet; Bacon's precepts relating rather to external conduct and worldly future, than to the inner composition of character, or to the "wide, gray, lampless" depths of human destiny. And the critic finds the same national characteristics, though on an infinitely lower level, in Franklin's oracular saws.

activity of movement Hamlet's mind is the logical contrary to that of the aged minister; and besides, Hamlet "dislikes the man as false to his true allegiance in the matter of the succession to the crown." We are reminded of Johnson's Prince of Abyssinia and his didactic sage. The third chapter of *Rasselas* begins with an account of how the prince's aged instructor, imagining that he had made himself acquainted with the young man's disease of mind, was in hope of curing it by counsel, and how therefore he officiously sought an opportunity of conference, which the prince, "having long considered him as one whose intellects were exhausted," was not very willing to afford. Youth generally thinks itself wiser than age, remarks Dr. Maginn, and we wonder not to find Hamlet treating Polonius as a driveller: the old gentleman bears courteously with the incivilities of one whom he considers to be either a mere madman or a prankish jester, and, recurring to the days of his youth, excuses the prince for indulging in feelings which lead to derangement of ideas. "He is throughout the ceremonious but sagacious *attaché* of a palace; and the king and queen accordingly treat him with the utmost deference, and consult him in their most critical emergencies;" and he dies in their service, fitly practising a stratagem in perfect accordance with the *morale* of the circle in which he has always moved, and in which he has engaged to show his wisdom, devotion, and address. "Abstracted from his courtier-character, Polonius is a man of profound sense, and of strict and affectionate attention to his duties. A man whom his children love can never be contemptible." Grant that natural affection will do much,—yet, argues "Oliver Yorke," the buffoon of the stage never could have inspired the feelings exhibited by his children, who must have been perpetually grieved and disgraced by antic buffoonery, of which they, from their connexion with the court, must have been constant witnesses: Laertes, a fine high-spirited young gentleman, and Ophelia, the rose of May, the grace and ornament of the circle in which she moved, could not have so deeply revered and bitterly deplored their father, if he had been indeed a great 'baby still in his swaddling-

clouds. "The *double* of Pantaloon, whom we see tumbling about in Drury Lane, would not have roused the blood of Laertes to fury, still less led him to justify assassination in avenging his fall; nor would his death have driven Ophelia to madness." There is something to remind us of him in the celebrated Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, that most important personage of any at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and by Peter Martyr facetiously entitled the "third king of Spain,"—a man whom the king and queen kept ever by their side, in peace and war,—never taking any measure of consequence without consulting him; a man of lofty and venerable presence, (he was archbishop of Toledo, and grand cardinal of Spain,) and held to be of ripe judgment and shrewd intellect, with a power of talk, and yet a master of despatch in matters of business. Peter Martyr's mild jest fastens on the major-domo prestige of the man, as it might have done on that of Polonius. How to *act* the part of the latter has puzzled some good, and defied the bad art of many bad, actors. No wonder if few players care to play it; for as the sometime editor of *Fraser*, already quoted, has taken occasion to show, custom exacts that it be represented as a comic part, and yet it wants the stimulants which cheer a comedian: there are no situations or reflections to call forth peals of laughter, or even fill the audience with ordinary merriment; he is played as a buffoon, but the text does not afford the adjuncts of buffoonery, and so, to supply their place, antic gesture and grimace are resorted to by the puzzled performer,—puzzled, because endeavouring to do what the author never intended. That Elizabeth's austere Lord High Treasurer might have been the mark for the covert wit of the dramatist, Maginn deems highly probable; and the enemy of Essex and Raleigh could not, he surmises, be an object of admiration in the eyes of Shakspeare. "Lord Burleigh, in his courtly demeanour, was as observant of etiquette as Polonius, and as ready in using indirections to find thereby directions out. The Queen was fond both of ceremony and statecraft;" but upon the whole it may be doubted much that the old gentleman in *Hamlet* is intended

for anything more than a general personification of ceremonious courtiers. And it is suggested that if Lord Chesterfield had designed to write a commentary upon Polonius, he could not have more completely succeeded than by writing his famous letters to his son. The author of the *Shakspeare Papers* is willing to concede some resemblance to Lord Ogleby in Polonius; but he strenuously asserts it to be not more impossible—if degrees of impossibility be in fancy allowable—to perform the pantomimic Pantaloon seriously in the manner of King Lear, than to make the impression which Shakspeare desired to make in Polonius, if he be exhibited in the style of the dotard of Spanish or Italian comedy, or the Sganarelle whom Molière has borrowed from them.

§ II.

PATERNAL ADVICE TO LAERTES.

Hamlet, Act i., Sc. 3.

A NORTH BRITISH critic who declares Polonius to talk at times like another Dr. Johnson, has this detrimentally qualified judgment to pass on the valedictory counsel to Laertes: "The advice of Polonius to his son is full of practical wisdom; but, owing to the contrast with the frozen stupidity of the man from whom it comes, reminds us of a half-melted and streaming mass of ice." But the advice has sorely puzzled those who mistake Polonius for a senile buffoon, altogether worldly and prudential as it is, such as a worldly-wise man, says Hartley Coleridge, might derive from the stores of experience, long after he had lost the power of applying his experience in passing occasions. Polonius anticipated Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son. He struck the keynote of the valedictory counsel of the "noble kinsman," versified by the first Lord Lytton:

"We send you second to a court, 'tis true;
Small, as befits a diplomat so new,"

Quoth my wise kinsman ; 'but requiring all
 Your natural gifts ;—to rise not is to fall.
 And hark ye, stripling, you are handsome, young,
 Active, ambitious, and from statesmen sprung.
 Wed well—add wealth to power by me possest,
 And sleep on roses,—I will find the rest.
 But one false step,—pshaw, boy, I do not preach
 Of saws and morals, his own code to each,—
 By one false step, I mean one foolish thing,
 And the wax melts, my Icarus, from your wing !
 Let not the heart the wretched mind betray,—
 Enough—no answer !—sail the first of May.' ”

The advice of Polonius is demonstrably a cento of quotations from Lyly's *Euphues*, as Mr. W. L. Rushton has made clear in his *Shakespeare's Euphuism*, where he places the precepts of Polonius and his original side by side. The significance of the advice Professor Dowden finds less in the matter than in the sententious manner. Polonius, he says, has been wise with the little wisdom of worldly prudence : he has been a master of indirect means of getting at the truth, “windlaces and assays of bias.” In the shallow lore of life he has been learned ; of true wisdom he never had a gleam. And what Shakspeare wished to signify in this speech, the student of his Mind and Art takes to be, that wisdom of Polonius' kind consists of a set of maxims ; all such wisdom might be set down for the head-lines of copy-books ; that is to say, his wisdom is not the outflow of a rich or deep nature, but the little accumulated hoard of a long and superficial experience : this is what the sententious manner signifies.*

There is a smart Polonian flavour about the advice imparted to Demonicus by Isocrates, in a characteristic epistle, more shrewd than deep, worldly-wise rather than high-toned, yet, as a Christian critic admits, tolerably well adapted to

* And very rightly, to Professor Dowden's thinking, has Shakspeare put into Polonius' mouth the noble lines beginning “To thine own self be true,” to which we shall recur anon. “Yes ; Polonius has got one great truth among his copy-book maxims, but it comes in as a little bit of hard, unvital wisdom like the rest. ‘Dress well, don't lend or borrow money ; to thine own self be true.’”—*Shakspeare : His Mind and Art*, p. 142.

workaday heathen life, with a faint recognition here and there of something higher and beyond. His monitory maxims addressed to the young man just entering on active life are such as these: that immoderate drinking so enfeebles the mind as to make it like a driverless chariot; that a friend should be entrusted with secrets only that are no secrets; that it is advantageous to extol absent friends, who will hear of it from your hearers, and both will the more admire you for your loyalty; that a good way of worming out any one's opinions on a matter that nearly concerns you, is to put the case to them as if it were perfectly indifferent;—concerning which last maxim a recent commentator observes, that it might need Isocratean artifice to dissemble your personal interest, and a bungling Demonicus might lay himself open to the charge of disingenuousness.*

To the shrewd, sensible, worldly, and yet from time to time better than worldly, wisdom which Polonius bestows on his son, now going out into life, an archiepiscopal translator of Calderon finds, not indeed a match, but a noteworthy approximation, in the counsel imparted by the Mayor of Zalamea, in the play of the same name:

“Be courteous in thy manner, and liberal of thy purse,” for instance;

* The Greek rhetorician's further bit of advice, not to speak but “when you are well up in your subject,” or unless “when there is no help for it, but speak you must,” may be compared, on the safe side-taking, however diverse the drift, with the Polonian “Give thy thoughts no tongue,”—and its correlative,

“Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice;

Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.”

Mr. Greville in his *Diary* declares the wisest man mentioned in history to be the vagrant in the Tuileries Gardens, in Charles the Tenth's time, who walked about with a gag on, and who, when taken up by the police and questioned why he went about in that guise, replied that he was imprudent, and that he had adopted this precaution to prevent his saying anything to get himself into trouble.

The monition in the Biglow Papers is clear and emphatic:

“No, never say nothin' without you're compell'd tu,
An' then don't say nothin' thet you can be held tu.

* * * * *

A ginooine statesman should be on his guard,
Ef he *must* hev beliefs, nut to b'lieve 'em tu hard;

"for 'tis the hand to the bonnet and in the pocket that make friends in this world ; of which to gain one good, all the gold the sun breeds in India, or the universal sea sucks down, were a cheap purchase. Speak no evil of women ; I tell thee the meanest of them deserves our respect ; for of women do not we all come ? Quarrel with no one but with good cause ; by the Lord, over and over again, when I see masters and schools of arms among us, I say to myself, ' This is not the thing we want at all, *How to fight*, but *Why to fight*, that is the lesson we want to learn.' "

The parting counsel to her son Bertram of the Countess in *All's Well that Ends Well*, offers more than one parallel passage ; for example,

" Love all ; trust a few,
Do wrong to none : be able for thine enemy
Rather in power than use ; and keep thy friend
Under thy own life's key : be check'd for silence,
But never tax'd for speech."

But *her* counsel, it has been remarked, opens and ends with motherly passion of fear and pride, in which lies enclosed her little effort at moral precept.

On Christmas Day of the year 1677, John Evelyn records in his Diary : " I gave my son an office, with instructions how to govern his youth." Original Walker could not devise a better manual for the purpose than what he styles the " excellent and excellently expressed advice of Polonius to

For, ez sure ez he does, he'll be blartin' 'em out
'Thout regardin' the natur' o' man more'n a spout,
Nor it don't ask much gumption to pick out a flaw
In a party whose leaders are loose in the jaw."

The Epistle Burns addressed to a Young Friend breathes something of the same canny or pawky caution ; (previous stanzas had emulated the spirit of Polonius in other particulars, such as, " A man may tak' a neibor's part, yet hae nae cash to spare him ; "—" But, och ! mankind are unco weak, and little to be trusted ; If self the wavering balance shake, it's rarely right adjusted," and so on, in the course of that epistle which might perhaps turn out a song, and did turn out a sermon :)

" Aye free, aff han' your story tell, when wi' a bosom crony ;
But still keep something to yoursel' ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel' as weel's ye can frae critical dissection,
But keek through every other man wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection."

Robert the Rhymer was well read in Shakspeare, as well as in human nature.

his son," in precepts "admirably adapted to form a man of the world and a gentleman, in the best sense of the terms." They have never been for worldly wisdom surpassed, affirms Dr. Maginn, who allows the ten precepts of Lord Burleigh, addressed to his son Robert, on which the apophthegms of Polonius are supposed to be based, to be perhaps equal in shrewdness, but wanting in pithiness and condensation of verse. "Neither are they as philosophical, being drawn, to talk logically, *à posteriori*, while those of Shakspeare are deduced *à priori*." Lord Burleigh gives us but the petty details,—in Shakspeare we find the principle. The fifth maxim, for instance, on borrowing and lending money, is full of practical good sense, no doubt, as indeed is everything that "wise Burleigh spoke;" but it might occur to minds of smaller calibre than that of the Lord High Treasurer. Polonius takes higher ground :

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend ;
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

Though a comparison of all the precepts or maxims* of the poet and the statesman would yield a similar result, nobody, remarks the author of the *Shakspeare Papers*, ever thought of exhibiting Burleigh, inferior as he is thus shown to be in dramatic wisdom, as an object of merriment upon the stage for many a year after he had been gathered to his fathers,

* A maxim, once said Coleridge in his table-talk, is a conclusion upon observation of matters of fact, and is merely retrospective ; an idea, or, if you like, a principle, carries knowledge within itself, and is prospective. Polonius, he went on to say, is a man of maxims. "While he is descanting on matters of past experience, as in that excellent speech to Laertes before he sets out on his travels, he is admirable ; but when he comes to advise or project, he is a mere dotard. You see, Hamlet, as the man of ideas, despises him."

In another paragraph, Coleridge likens a "man of maxims only" to a Cyclops with one eye, and that eye placed in the back of his head.

There is matter, if not manner, to remind us of Polonius in Lord Monmouth's advice to Coningsby when the old peer sent his promising grandson to Cambridge—including the pecuniary clauses—never to borrow money, and always to confine his loans to small sums, and then only to friends of whom he wished to get rid.

until it pleased Sheridan to put him forward to make his oracular nod.

Glancing in other directions for illustrative parallels, we light on the parting advice bestowed on Spinella by the noble Genoese, Auria, in John Ford's play of *The Lady's Trial* (1639); containing such lines as,

"Admit of visits as of physic forced,
Not to procure health, but for safe prevention
Against a growing sickness; in thy use
Of time and of discourse be found so thrifty
As no remembrance may impeach thy rest.
Appear not in a fashion that can prompt
The gazer's eye, or holla. . . .
In recreations be both wise and free;
Live still at home, home to thyself, howe'er
Enrich'd with noble company," etc.

Pitched in another key is the maternal advice in Crabbe, of one with whom the world had dealt full hard, and who had keenly felt the usage:

"Read not too much, nor write in verse or prose,
For then you make the dull and foolish foes. . . .
Keep your good name," she said; "and that to keep,
You must not suffer vigilance to sleep. . . .
And, one thing more—to free yourself from foes,
Never a secret to your friend disclose. . . .
Let not your heart be soften'd; if it be,
Let not the man his softening influence see. . . .
But to your fortune look, on that depend
For your life's comforts, comforts that attend
On wealth alone—wealth gone, they have their end."

This range of ethics might bring us, along or adown a gently inclined plane, to the didactic summary of Mrs. Lobkins addressing little Paul Clifford: "Mind thy kittychism, child, and reverence old age. Never steal, 'specially when any one be in the way. Never go snacks with them as be older than you,—the older a cove be, the more he cares for his self, and the less for his partner. . . . Be modest, Paul, and stick to your sitivation in life. Go not with fine tobymen, who burn out like a candle wot has a thief in it,—all flare and gone in a whiffy. Leave liquor to the aged, who can't do

without it. . . . Read your Bible, and talk like a pious un-
 people goes more by your words than your actions. If
 you wants what is not your own, try and do without it; and
 if you cannot do without it, take it away by insinivation, not
 bluster." The epigrammatic caricaturist enjoyed burlesquing,
 and that broadly, the didactic manner as well as matter of
 certain formal advisers. Books of professed Advice are, as a
 rule, considerably open to satire. Henry Crabb Robinson
 made an entry in his Diary of his becoming acquainted with
 Osborne's *Advice to his Son*, on the strength of his impression
 that it was a favourite with Wordsworth, who had made a
 present of it to a friend. "But I found, on inquiry," writes
 the Rydal guest, "that Wordsworth likes only detached
 remarks, for Osborne is a mere counsellor of selfish prudence
 and caution. Surely there is no need to print—'Beware lest
 in trying to save your friend you get drowned yourself.'" *Polonius*
 might not have been above saying something very
 like it, though he would have so point-blank-versified as to
 redeem it from vulgarity. Coleridge says of him, that in the
 great ever-occurring dangers and duties of life, where to dis-
 tinguish the fit objects for the application of the maxims
 collected by the experience of a long life, requires no fineness
 of tact, "*Polonius* is uniformly made respectable." No critic,
 indeed, and no uncritical reader either, can fail to see much
 that is admirable, as well as characteristic and therefore
 worldly-wise, in the old statesman's counsels to his children.

These are not indeed struck to the chord of the psalmist's
 "Come, ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you
 the fear of the Lord. . . . Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy
 lips, that they speak no guile. Eschew evil, and do good;
 seek peace, and ensue it." But the strain we hear from the
 veteran minister is in a higher mood than his wont, when
 there falls from his lips the ennobling, elevating, magnani-
 mously self-respecting precept,—justly appraised by him as
 above all the rest:

"This above all,—To thine own self be true;
 And it must follow, as the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be false to any man."

Not that this utterance of his is inspired with the fervour of the patriot's closing couplet in *King John*,

"Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true;"*

of which the Hastings of *King Henry VI.* supplies a but slightly varied reading:

"Why, knows not Montague, that of itself,
England is safe, if true within itself."

But, rightly interpreted, the self-loyalty, or self-allegiance, enjoined by Polonius is worthy of all acceptance, emulation, and earnest cultivation. Many are the various readings of it that might be suggested. "*Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse*," is a sentence of sententious Seneca's. A most sententious lesson, Dr. Thomas Brown calls that line (and a bit over) of one of our old poets, which bids us consider what sort of a friend he is likely to prove to us, who has been the destroyer, or at least the constant disquieter, of his own happiness:

"See if he be
Friend to himself, who would be friend to thee."

It is a man's inward, not his outward misfortunes, that bring him to the dust, Mr. Carlyle teaches; "Nature fashions no creature without planting in it the strength needful for its action and duration." It is in a life of truth, and in the "inexpugnable citadel of his own soul," that a true man's strength must lie. "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself," writes Emerson, in the essay on Self-reliance. One of the Meditations of Marcus Antoninus is to this effect: Let

* Calamities may be inflicted by others, but no people can be degraded except by their own acts, Mr. Buckle remarks. The foreign spoiler works mischief; he cannot cause shame. "With nations, as with individuals, none are dishonoured if they are true to themselves."—*History of Civilization*, vol. ii., p. 133.

To apply Byron's lines:

"Enough—no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bods and despot-sway."

The Giaour.

your choice run all one way, and be resolute for that which is best. *Bon pour moi*, is Rousseau's phrase, in a passage descriptive of his vagaries of amour-propre, which, he confesses, (for it is a part of the *Confessions*), began by revolting against injustice, but ended by despising it: "en se repliant sur mon âme, il s'est contenté que je fusse bon pour moi. Alors, redevenant amour de moi-même, il s'est rentré dans l'ordre de la nature, et m'a delivré du joug de l'opinion." Ever since which settlement, he professed to have found peace of mind, and almost happiness; for, in whatsoever situation one is placed, it is only by being untrue to one's self that abiding wretchedness is ensured. To the hero of Galt's *Entail*, at the moment of leaving home, the still and stationary objects around—the protected city and the everlasting hills—seemed to bear an assurance that, however obscured the complexion of his fortunes might at that moment be, there was still "something within himself that ought not to suffer any change, from the evanescent circumstances of another's frown or favour." Honour's Martyr he would be, as in Emily Brontë's poem so-called, with this resolve for ultimatum:

"So foes pursue, and cold allies
Mistrust me, every one;
Let me be false in others' eyes,
If faithful in my own."

The Characteristic of an Englishman as depicted by Andrew Bourd, physician to Henry VIII., comprises this noteworthy reflection:

"I had no peer if to myself I were true;
Because I am not so, diverse times do I rue."

Philosophically the Countess Terzky in Schiller enjoins the law and duty of consistency on Wallenstein;

"For, by the laws of Spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict consistence with itself.
Self-contradiction is the only wrong."

The closing line of Pope's second Satire, after Horace, runs: "Let us be fixed, and our own masters still." Professor Lowell's poems, alike the sentimental and the satirical, offer

us divers available adaptations of the Polonian precept. Thus, in one of his sonnets,

"Be as thou wouldst be in thy own clear sight,
And so thou wilt in all the world's ere long."

And elsewhere :

"Knowing that I . . . have been most true to thee,
And that whoso in one thing has been true
Can be as true in all."

While the national application of the canon crops out in the *Fable for Critics* :

"Be true to yourselves and this new nineteenth age, . . .
To your own New-World instincts contrive to be true,
Keep your ears open wide to the Future's first call,
Be whatever you will, but yourselves first of all."

The Norbert of Mr. Browning's *In a Balcony* consistently and persistently enforces the maxim that

"Truth is the strong thing. Let man's Life be true !
Time prove the rest !"

So again, on another page :

"Let us do so—aspire to live as these
In harmony with truth, ourselves being true:
Take the first way, and let the second come."

§ III.

HOLDING FAST BY ONE'S OLD FAST FRIENDS.

Hamlet, Act i., Sc. 3.

ALL the clauses of the paternal advice given to Laertes are noteworthy enough to deserve annotation ; but only two or three may be singled out for that purpose in this and the sections next ensuing. Let one of the selected topics be that in favour of tried and therefore trustworthy old friends, to be preferred on every account, and in every sense, to

shallow though showy acquaintanceships, hastily made, and easily dropped.

“The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel ;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade.”

It is of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach to enjoin, “Forsake not an old friend ; for the new is not comparable to him : a new friend is as new wine ; when it is old, thou shalt drink it with pleasure.” No man who hath once tasted, and learnt the value of, old wine, straightway desireth new ; for he saith, The old is better.

At any rate, as the Latin adage runs, while you cultivate new friendships, be mindful to preserve your old ones : “*Novos amicos dum paras, veteres cole.*” For, how very much the best friend for a man is the oldest ! as some one exclaims in Plautus : “*Quam veterrimus homini optimus est amicus.*” As he neared his end, Dr. Johnson grappled the closer to his big heart, as with hooks of steel, the tried friends he still had. “We have now,” he wrote to Bennet Langton, “been long enough acquainted to have many images in common, and therefore to have a source of conversation which neither the learning nor the wit of a new companion can supply.” Chamfort says that the friends we make after a certain age, and with whom we try to replace those we have lost, are, to our old friends, what glass eyes, false teeth, and wooden legs are, as compared with real seeing eyes, natural teeth, and limbs of flesh and bone. “Cultivate kindly, reader,” Mr. Thackeray wrote, “those friendships of your youth : it is only in that generous time that they are formed.” How different, on his showing, the intimacies of after-days are, and how much weaker the grasp of your own hand after it has been shaken about in twenty years’ commerce with the world, and has squeezed and dropped a thousand equally careless palms ! That is dulling the palm power of entertainment Shakspeare speaks of. “As you can seldom fashion your tongue to speak a new language after twenty, the heart refuses to receive friendship

pretty soon : it gets too hard to yield to the impression." In one of M. de Tocqueville's letters may be read an avowal that before he entered public life (and politics often sever two friends engaged in the same sphere), he set a high value upon his old and true friends ; but since that time they had risen a hundred per cent. in his estimation. If he were to lose them, he felt that he should form no other attachments. The time when such ties are contracted was now for ever past for him. " Outside the small circle of my affections, I look on men only as neutrals or as enemies ; as supporters or as adversaries ; as people to be esteemed or despised, but not as friends ; and if those whom I still [1844] possess die before me, I shall die alone ; at least my heart will be solitary." Horace Walpole writes to George Montagu, in 1765 : " You know, if you believe an experience of above thirty years, that you are one of the very, very few for whom I really care a straw. You know how long I have been vexed at seeing so little of you. What has one to do, when one grows tired of the world, as we both do, but to draw nearer and nearer, and gently waste the remains of life with the friends with whom one began it ! " The paths that Ion trod with Phocion with tremulous joy when both were urchins, " Let us tread them now " again, he proposes,

" And think we are but older by a day,
And that the pleasant walk of yesternight
We are to-night retracing."

Apropos of Charles Nodier's *ami d'enfance*, the excellent Weiss, Sainte-Beuve asks, " Qui donc n'a pas ainsi quelqu'un de ces amis purs et fidèles qui est resté au toit quand nous l'avons déserté, le pigeon casanier qui garde la tourelle ? mais l'autre souvent ne revient pas." But here is Walpole again, writing within the same month to his namesake Mann,—though perhaps neither Horace may answer overwell to the dove-like image, the *pigeon casanier*, of the French critic : " I have no joy in new acquaintance, because I can have no confidence in them." Why was Sir Horace Mann then a fixture in Florence ? Were these two never to meet again ? Half a dozen years later we find Walpole

writing to the friend whom of all others he is believed to have been most attached to, Marshal Conway: "How few persons last, if one lives to be old, to whom one can talk without reserve. It is impossible to be intimate with the young, because they and the old cannot converse on the same common topics; and of the old that survive, there are few one can commence a friendship with, because one has probably all one's life despised their heart or their understandings." Another lustrum has lapsed, and he is writing to Mann again: "Old friends are the great blessing of one's latter years—half a word conveys one's meaning. They have memory of the same events, and have the same mode of thinking." He had just lost a prized old friend in Mr. Chute; and he says of this "irreparable loss," "I shall not seek to replace him. . . . Is it possible to love younger, as one loved an habitual old friend of thirty-five years' standing? I have young relations that may grow upon me, for my nature is affectionate, but can they grow *old* friends? My age forbids that." He was now on the verge of sixty. "I am very constant and sincere to friends of above forty years," he assures his clerical correspondent, William Cole, about the same time. With some of these old friends he quarrelled, sooner or later; but, with all his frivolity, this Strawberry Hill fine gentleman *was* affectionate, as he claimed to be considered; and the renewal of old friendships was at least as welcome to him as to the G ronte of Gresset, when "making it up" with Ariste, in the closing lines of *Le M chant*:

"Et nous, mon cher ami,
Qu'il ne soit plus parl  de torts ni de querelles,
Ni de gens de mode et d'amit es nouvelles . . .
Je sens qu'on revient toujours aux bonnes gens."

Old friends are best, quoth Selden in his table-talk: "King James used to call for his old shoes; they were easiest for his feet." Mentivole, in Beaumont and Fletcher, waxes warm in regard of so constant and so sacred a friendship as one "of fifty winters' standing; such a friendship, That ever did continue like the Spring, Nor saw the fall o' the

leaf." Friendship, like the clothes we wear, says Hazlitt, becomes the easier from custom : new friendships do not sit well on old or middle age : affection is a science to which it is too late to serve an apprenticeship after a certain period of life. The friendships of boyhood, says Goethe, like relationship of blood, possess this important advantage, that mistakes and misunderstandings never produce irreparable injury ; and the old regard after a time will always establish itself.* King James's simile of old shoes, and Hazlitt's of old clothes, are constructively conjoined in Mr. Anthony Trollope's comparison of new friends to one's best coat and polished patent-leather dress boots, intended for holiday wear, and at other times neither serviceable nor comfortable : they do not answer the required purpose, and are ill adapted to give us the ease we seek. A new coat, he remarks, has this advantage, that it will in time become old and comfortable, which is more than can by any means be predicted with certainty of a new friend. And he utters a cry of woe to those men who go through the world with none-but new coats on their backs, with no boots but those of polished leather, with none but new friends to comfort them in adversity. Southey was in his sixtieth year when he claimed to have found out how little we know of men with whom we become acquainted after a certain age, and upon what different foundation the friendships of boyhood, of youth, and of maturity rest : the older they are, like good Rhenish wine, the finer is the relish. " Old friends are the best of all possessions, and there is nothing in this world which can supply their loss." So he wrote to Charles Wynn in 1821. And next year Robert the Rhymer renewed the strain. " Old friends and old books are the best things that this world affords (I like old wine also),

* It is an observation of Miss Thackeray's, that misunderstandings are far more difficult things than people imagine in love or in friendship : some instinct, as she puts it, protects travellers in that strange country where all is instinct, and if they disagree it is that from some secret reason they do not belong to each other, for quarrels are nothing to those who are united in sympathy.

and in these I am richer than most men (the wine excepted)." A latter-day philosopher warns us, however, against the common trick of fancying that it is impossible for a man to find a new friend without being more or less inconstant to his old ones,—countenance being lent in fact to such a notion by the conduct of a certain kind of thin-natured people, who are ever ready to set up a new idol, ceasing at the same time to pay further deference to the idols they have set up previously; and it is agreed that there are few of the petty basenesses of life for which so little excuse can be made, or which are so thoroughly hateful, as this practice of habitually deserting the old for the new, simply because it is new. But it is urged that the later we can prolong that flexibility and openness of spirit which welcomes new friends without disparaging old ones, the more likely shall we be to postpone the drawing nigh of the evil days, and the years when men say there is no pleasure in them.

It has been called the most winning circumstance of every intimacy for a man to be necessary to another where few are necessary, but this in fact implies constant personal intercourse. All minds that need another mind to lean upon must, it is urged, be repelled, and in the end alienated, by absence: they cannot remain the same: they must change according to the new influence, and put themselves out of gear for ever again fitting into the old groove. "Only where an active intimacy is a luxury, not a necessity, the effects of separation are less conspicuous, and the renewal of the old relations more possible." There are, on the other hand, persons whose tepid regard grows into warmth from the mere effect of absence through an uncongenial period; and these are said to have a taste for what they call old friends—a certain antiquarian fidelity which leads them to like people for being old in their recollection. "Tickled by the unforeseen cordiality springing from sudden contact, each side eulogizes old friendships as something immeasurably more genuine and trustworthy than new"—experience showing us that almost all old friendships owe

a good deal to absence.* Southey had the right to pique himself on being made of sounder stuff, when he assured another old friend, in 1826, "Time and distance make no change in my affections; we shift our acquaintance as we shift our place of abode. Friendship is a different thing, and I never yet cast off a friend till he had shown himself unworthy of standing in that relation." The casting off a friend is at any time a serious matter, however brought about, and however carried out. Dear as life an endeared friend is, or should be; and as hard to part with.

Φίλον γάρ ἐσθλὸν ἐκβαλεῖν, ἴσον λέγω
Καὶ τὸν παρ' αὐτῷ βίσιον, ὃν πλείστον φιλεῖ.

According to some observers, cynical more or less, there is no such breaker-up of old friendships as wedlock. The wife is supposed to be unique and supreme in her power of dispersing and discarding the husband's best and oldest friends. La Bruyère's maxim, "L'amour et l'amitié s'excluent l'un l'autre," might be taken, or mistaken, to confirm this view. There is a passage about domineering wifeness, in Juvenal's sixth satire, which has been freely, rather too freely Englished,

"She deals about thy hatred and regard;
Thou must, if bid, thy oldest friends discard."

Shakspeare's Gloster complains, for himself and Clarence, to their uxorious brother, King Edward, "But in your bride you bury brotherhood." Queen Katharine, pleading her cause before King Henry, presses upon him this question among others that ought to tell unanswerably in her favour:

"Which of your friends
Have I not strove to love, although I knew
He were mine enemy?"

And has it not been said, that to have known a man before

* Matthew Bramble writes to his dear doctor and constant crony, on the occasion of a reunion with old college chums—the happiest day he had passed these twenty years,—“You and I, Lewis, having been always together, never tasted friendship in this high *goût*, contracted from long absence. . . . It was a renovation of youth, a kind of resuscitation from the dead,” etc.—*Humphrey Clinker*.

his marriage is to be the natural enemy of his wife? Arthur Hugh Clough wrote to a newly wedded old college crony, by way of excuse for delaying a letter: "This has lingered, I believe, chiefly because I desired to add some self-introducing phrase to your wife, the precise form of which was difficult; so pray give what you think becoming an ancient ally of her husband's—best wishes—*submission*? For to a certain extent, even at this distance, old friends have to make their graceful withdrawal. It seems to me . . . that a wife is a sort of natural enemy to a man's friends." The closing couplet of one of Shakspeare's sonnets is not of every-day and obvious or easy application:

"But here's the joy: my friend and I are one;
Sweet flattery! then she loves but me alone."

The minds of a married couple, it has been said, supposing them both to have minds of some sort, grow alike; the germ of resemblance pushes itself on until it reaches its maturity. And most husbands "accommodate themselves to their wives in their manner of living, and in the way in which they regard and treat their neighbours and friends." It was before marriage that Crabbe's Counter spoke up like a man—he altered his key afterwards:

"Friends I invite, and who shall dare t' object,
Or look on them with coolness or neglect?
No! I must ever of my house be head,
And, thus obey'd, I condescend to wed."

Swift commends and congratulates one male correspondent on this ground, "that you alone of all my Irish acquaintance have found out the secret of loving your lady and children with some reserve of love for your friends." A letter of Byron's to Tom Moore, dated October 14, 1814, begins: "An' there were anything in marriage that would make a difference between my friends and me, particularly in your case, I would 'none on't.'" Washington Irving qualified his "most hearty" congratulations to his old friend Brevoort by the confession that at first the news of his marriage had rather saddened than gladdened him: "It seemed, in a manner, to divorce us for ever; for marriage is the grave of bachelor intimacies,

and after having lived and grown together for many years, so that our habits, thoughts, and feelings were quite blended and intertwined, a separation of this kind is a serious matter." So again De Tocqueville, already a husband, in a letter to M. de Kergorlay: "You will soon be married, and I cannot help trembling lest the kind and friendly relations that would be so favourable to our intimacy should not be established between our wives; for experience will teach you how difficult it is to separate oneself in anything from one's partner." Shelley asks a correspondent, in one of the most pointed passages of a metrical letter full of points, and of point,—

"Have you not heard
When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
His best friends hear no more of him?"

So Sir Anthony Aylmer, in Mr. Trollope's story, muses on the old days in which he had been master of a bedroom near St. James's Street, frequented by old friends whom he never saw now, and of whom he never heard except as one and another, year after year, shuffled away from their wives to that world in which there is no marrying or giving in marriage. Colonel Hamley once affirmed that none but a bachelor knows what it is to be a friend, or, perchance, to have one; for, though you shall have been intimate with a man from his youth upwards, and have shared together pleasures and dangers, and have bandied thoughts to and fro, like shuttle-cocks, by many a jovial, else solitary, fireside—yet, let the idol of a three days' fancy intervene, and the tried friend's image fades: let marriage ensue, and the memory of those ancient times goes for nothing, strangled by this new close tie. Scott's Bucklaw promises more than he may be able to make good when he essays to reassure the drooping spirit of his dependant, Captain Craigengelt: the board shall still have a corner for him, and the corner a trencher, and the trencher a glass beside it; "and the board-end shall be filled, and the trencher and the glass shall be replenished for thee, if all the petticoats in Lothian had sworn the contrary.—What, man! I am not the boy to put myself into leading-strings." So again with Captain Henchman, Jack Todhunter,

and the rest, in the case of Thackeray's Marquis of Farintosh, when they became a prey to misgivings respecting their patron's change in life, and could not view without anxiety the advent of a mistress who might reign over him and them, who might probably not like their company, and might exert her influence over her husband to oust these honest fellows from places in which they were very comfortable. Might not a new marchioness hate hunting, smoking, jolly parties, and toad-eaters in general, or perhaps bring into the house favourites of her own? Olivarez warned the Infanta that if she did not, as soon as she was married to Baby Charles, suppress his too constant co-mate and familiar, Buckingham, she would herself be suppressed, or something like it. "We are Poins, and Nym, and Pistol," growled out George Warrington and his set, in the painting and smoking room of Clive Newcome, the newly married man: "Now Prince Hal is married, and shares the paternal throne, his Princess is ashamed of his brigand associates of old." It is for a Sir Gregory Fop to exclaim, in Beaumont and Fletcher, "Do you think I'll have any of the wits hang upon me after I am married?" Mr. Disraeli would seem to have been penning a paradox when he wrote that women like you to enter their house as their husband's friend. A dissertator on the theme of Man and his Master, or on the Isolation of Man, more plausibly avers that when Brown meets you in the street and hopes that his approaching marriage will make no difference in your friendship, and that you will see as much of one another as before, you know that the phrases simply mean that your intimacy is at an end: there will be no more pleasant lounges in the morning, no more strolls in the Park, no more evenings at the Club. "Woman has succeeded in so completely establishing this cessation of former friendships as a condition of the new married life, that hardly any one dreams of thinking what an enormous sacrifice it is." And therefore is it pronounced no slight triumph that woman should not only have succeeded in enforcing the dissolution of this social tie as the first condition of married life, but that she has invested that dissolution with the air of an

axiom which nobody dreams of disputing. If the husband, said Elia, be a man with whom you have lived on a friendly footing before marriage—if you did not come in on the wife's side—if you did not sneak into the house in her train, but were an old friend in fast habits of intimacy before their courtship was so much as thought on,—then, “look about you; your tenure is precarious; before a twelvemonth shall roll over your head, you shall find your old friend gradually grow cool and altered towards you, and at last seek opportunities of breaking with you.” Elia professed to have scarce a married friend of his acquaintance, upon whose firm faith he could rely, whose friendship did not commence after the period of his marriage. With some limitations, *les femmes* can endure that; but that the goodman should have dared to enter into a solemn league of friendship in which they were not consulted, though it happened before they knew him, is to them, on Charles Lamb's showing, intolerable. John Locke on his travels had a shrewd eye open to the way of the world when he thus touched on a delicate question in one of his letters to Dr. Muppletoft: “I cannot forbear to touch, *en passant*, the chapter of matrimony, which methinks you are still hankering after; but if ever you should chance so to be given up as to marry, and, like other loving husbands, tell your wife who has dissuaded you, what a case shall I be in!” Dr. Parr, in a *grandis et verbosa epistola* to Sir Samuel Romilly, expresses his “exquisite satisfaction” in knowing that his friends see and feel the sincerity of his regard. “Before marriage, I, with my wonted plain dealing, told Mrs. Parr that I had given certain promises, . . . and I added explicitly, that no earthly consideration should induce me to violate one promise,” etc. The doctor and Mrs. Parr led a cat-and-dog's life, —there be liars else. But no such feline and canine concatenation marked or marred the married life of Dr. Chalmers; and him we find firing up at the bare notion of his old friend James Meldrum being kept away by Mrs. Meldrum from a long stay at the Kilmany Manse, because the manse had now a mistress. “This I could not submit to, and told her and Grace, that if I had conceived matrimony to be that kind of

thing, which was to detach my heart from any of its old feelings or old friendships, I never should have entered into it. James is accordingly with us; and the perfect cordiality with which all my friends are received and entertained by the lady of the house, has made her dearer to me than ever."

When Mr. Bowker, in *Land at Last*, hesitates about renewing his intimacy with a dear old friend come to town again, because "you see there's the wife to be taken into account now,"—a less mistrustful spirit replies, interrogatively, if not reproachfully, "You surely wouldn't doubt your reception by her? The mere fact of your being an old friend of her husband's would be sufficient to make you welcome." But Mr. Bowker can only bless the innocence of this amiable reasoner, and assure him, on the other hand, that to have been the friend of a man before his marriage is, *ipso facto*, to be on unfriendly terms with his wife. This cynic would seem to have graduated in the school of Hood's regretful Benedick, and to have learnt his ways, and his wife's,—the good lady who was for making a clean sweep of old clothes, old hats, and old friends :

"My clothes they were the queerest shape !
Such coats and hats she never met !
My ways they were the oddest ways !
My friends were such a vulgar set !
Poor Tomkinson was snubb'd and huff'd,
She could not bear that Mister Blogg—
What d'ye think of that, my Cat ?
What d'ye think of that, my Dog ? "

The best spirit of the better self of Polonius informs and animates these the closing lines of one of Ben Jonson's metrical epistles :

"Look if he be
Friend to himself that would be friend to thee :
For that is first required, a man be his own :
But he that's too much that, is friend of none.
Then rest, and a friend's value understand ;
It is a richer purchase than of land."

§ IV.

IN FOR A FIGHT, AND HOW TO GET OUT OF IT.

"Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel; but, being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee."*

Hamlet, Act i., Sc. 3.

So Laertes is counselled by his worldly-wise, experienced, shrewly-observant, cautiously circumspective, diplomatically disposed sire. Polonius is for being slow to fight, but for hitting hard when once in for it. Loath to begin, he would make the end a speedy, sharp, and sure one. He would by no means strike the first blow, but he would take good care to have the last, and to make it a caution. With good advice make war, he would say; and the good advice will apply both to the taking action for a fight—which should be wary; and to the taking part in it—which should be eager, energetic, and vigorously in earnest.

Hard by the gates of hell is the dwelling, in Spenser, of Atè, mother of strife; it is a "darksome delve far underground, with thornes and barren brakes environ'd round, that none the same may easily out win;

Yet many waies to enter may be found,
But none to issue forth when one is in:
For discord harder is to end than to begin."

Men capable of great and prolonged efforts of resistance, Mr. Froude remarks, are usually slow to commence struggles of which they, better than any one, foresee the probable consequences. Schiller's Archbishop of Rheims, in a medley of images, implores the high contending powers to

"pause with dread,
Ere from its scabbard ye unsheathe the sword.
The man of power lets loose the god of war,
But not, obedient, as from fields of air

* Under the title of "Polonius on Polemics," a previous chapter of illustrations of this Shakspearian text may be seen in the present penman's *Recreations of a Recluse*, vol. i., pp. 176—196.

Returns the falcon to the sportsman's hand,
Doth the wild deity obey the call
Of mortal voice."

And the appeal of the Maid of Orleans herself is to the same effect :

"Sovereigns and kings ! disunion shun with dread !
Wake not contention from the murky cave
Where he doth lie asleep ; for once aroused
He cannot soon be quell'd : he then begets
An iron brood, a ruthless progeny ;
Wildly the sweeping conflagration spreads."

The beginning of strife is said, in holy writ, to be as when one letteth out waters. Another text in the Book of Proverbs runs, "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof." A hasty contention, saith Jesus the son of Sirach, "kindleth a fire, and a hasty fighting sheddeth blood. If thou blow the spark, it shall burn." There is a Spanish proverb which Dr. Trench quotes as giving a fearful glimpse of those blood feuds which, having once begun, seem as if they could never end, and of violence evermore provoking its like: "Kill, and thou shalt be killed, and they shall kill him who kills thee." Bishop Fleetwood's lament over public disorder in Marlborough's time, is praised by Earl Stanhope for its "admirable eloquence"—where he says that God for our sins permitted the spirit of discord to go forth, and by troubling sore the camp, the city, and the country, to "spoil for a time this beautiful and pleasing prospect, and give us in its stead—I know not what." The beginnings of strife are as definite and often paltry as its progress is indefinite and its end beyond all guesswork.

As to the waging of war, the text in Ecclesiasticus will apply: "Let reason go before every enterprize, and counsel before every action." And so, in the sense already indicated, will this: "Do nothing without advice; and when thou hast once done, repent not." War once waged, on good advice, the same soundness of counsel would urge the waging it with a will, so as to ensure what Sir William Curtis pleonastically desiderated as "a speedy peace and soon." Being in for a

quarrel, make short work of it, if you can. With good advice make war, and with stout heart carry it on. Hold off as long as ever you may ; but, once in for it, so fight that your foe be the first to cry, Hold, enough ! If it be a just and necessary war—and no other is excusable—quit you like men, be strong. To the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, the exhortation of Nehemiah was, in face of the enemy, "Be not ye afraid of them : remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses." The "fight" has in it the ring of the iterated and reiterated monosyllable in "Britons, strike home !" The mighty men of Babylon who had forborne to fight, were no model for armed Hebrews. When a Christian apostle has to fight, it is not as one that beateth the air. Had it been the vocation of that spirited tent-maker to fight another sort of good fight of faith, as the Maccabees of old, his prowess would have won him a name among those who waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. And in that cause, too, would it have been his great right to say, "I have fought a good fight"—not uncertainly, hesitatingly, half-heartedly, or *ὡς ἄερα δέπων*—a pugilistic metaphor, which may mean beating the air either in private exercise, or as a prelude to the fight, or during the fight itself, when aiming a blow, and, by missing, spending one's strength for nought,—making a show of an encounter, but failing to hit hard, hit fast, hit home.

Lord Bacon, in his essay on Delays, speaks of the helmet of Pluto as "secrecy in the council, and celerity in the execution ;" and his archiepiscopal annotator exposes the unwisdom of those "mock-wise men" who, though slow and quick just in the same degree that a really wise man is, are so in the wrong places,—making their decisions hastily, and then becoming slow in the execution ; "who unmask their battery hastily, and then think of loading their guns." Elsewhere Dr. Whately describes a sort of people who are "slow and sure"—sure in cases that admit of leisurely deliberation, but utterly failing where promptitude is called for ; as again in another place he makes a study of those who "are bold

first and prudent afterwards"—who without good advice make war; and with pitiful stint of action and energy carry it on, or let it carry on itself, and so carry them away. There is point and purpose in the proverbial maxim of New England, "Be sure you are right, and then go ahead." The hero of one of Herr Scharling's Danish novels is meant to typify the national character: the Danish people, he tells us in his preface, are exceedingly calm, slow to take any determination, and still slower to act; hence they often become the object of scorn and ridicule to their adversaries until the extreme moment of danger arrives, when they shake off their spiritual lethargy, put out all their strength, and come off conquerors. Discussing the *morale* of revolutions, Edinburgh's most popular professor of moral philosophy declared them to be the very last resource of the thinking and the good, but still a resource; and when, said he, the rare imperious cases do occur, the patriot will lift his arm with reluctance, but when it is lifted, will wield it with all the force he can command, having first "made that calculation in which his own happiness and his own life have scarcely been counted as elements." Before you commence anything, counsels a later, but now a late, philosopher, provide as if all hope were against you: when you set about it, act as if there were not such a thing as fear. As with the advice in Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*,

"Ere yet the choice be made, no choice debate,
But, having chosen, dally not with fate."

The same poet's contrast of the brothers James and Robert, in another tale, is to the purpose:

"They both were brave, but Robert loved to run
And meet his danger—James would rather shun
The dangerous trial, but, whenever tried,
He all his spirit to the act applied."

Professor Blunt says of Henry the Eighth, when it had come to be a question whether the King should put down the monks, or the monks the King, that he had no alternative but to try a fall with them, and accordingly, having been slow (considering his temperament) to get into the quarrel, he still "acted as Lord Bacon would have advised, and being in it

bore himself bravely." Contrasting the characters of Francis the First and Charles the Fifth, Robertson describes the former as taking his resolutions suddenly, prosecuting them at first with warmth, and pushing them into execution with a most adventurous courage; but being destitute of the perseverance necessary to surmount difficulties, he often abandoned his designs, or relaxed the vigour of pursuit from impatience, and sometimes from levity. Charles, on the other hand, "deliberated long, and determined with coolness; but having once fixed his plan, he adhered to it with inflexible obstinacy, and neither danger nor discouragement could turn him aside from the execution of it." *Cochlea consiliis, in facto esto volucris*, runs the Latin adage. The speaking Bridge in the *Biglow Papers* is clear upon the subject, and the reverse of mealy-mouthed :

"We've got to fix this thing for good an' all ;
It's no use buildin' wut's agoin' to fall. . . .
We've turn'd our cuffs up, but, to put her thru,
We must git mad an' off with jackets, tu ;
'Twunt du to think thet killin' aint perlite,—
You've gut to be in airnest, ef you fight."

Mr. Froude accounts it the misfortune of Elizabeth, that while she could hesitate indefinitely when action was immediately necessary, the "perturbations of her mind," as Knowles called them, at other times swayed her into extremes, and she allowed sudden provocations to tempt her to the most ill-judged precipitancy. Contrast this temper of hers with Philip's of Spain: to be slow and silent, to take every precaution to ensure success, and then to deliver suddenly at last the blow which had been long vaguely impending—this was the Spanish method. Contrast it, again, with Mary Stuart's. In the summer of 1565, for instance, while Randolph had to keep writing that "when council is once taken, nothing is so needful as speedy execution," and while Elizabeth was keeping the Congregation in suspense, Mary was all fire, energy, and resolution—so that as post after post came in from Scotland, the English queen lost her breath at the rapidity of her royal cousin's movements, and resolution on

Elizabeth's part became more impossible as the need of it became more pressing. Yet, "so easy it would be for her to strike Mary Stuart down, if she had but half the promptitude of Mary herself." "From the moment she [Mary] had first taken the field, she had given her enemies no rest." Elizabeth's policy with regard to the revolted Netherlands was marked by the same taint; Mr. Motley laments that the stealthy but quick-darting tactics of Walsingham were not allowed to prevail over the solemn, stately, ponderous proceedings of Burghley, who yet was by far too fast for his irresolute mistress—so inopportunately irresolute. Burghley himself could be earnestly eloquent in his appeals to her: was this a moment to linger? was it wise to indulge any longer in doubtings and dreamings, and in yet a little more foldings of the arms to sleep, while that insatiable malice of the Spaniard was growing hourly more formidable, and approaching nearer and nearer?

In the troublous times for England of 1672, we find John Evelyn noting in his Diary, with sad-hearted reference to the loss in sea-fight of "my Lord Sandwich," that the latter was "prudent as well as valiant," "was for deliberation and reason" before risking an encounter, whereas those who egged him on were "for action and slaughter without either." There being no help for it, and as if with a resentful sense of being misconstrued as timid, Sandwich at last "entered like a lion, and fought like one too," but this time with fatal issue. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ.* The great minister, his contemporary, Colbert, had the character of being slow in conceiving his plans, and cautious in deciding upon their execution, courting and listening to advice at every stage; but when once his resolve was fixed, his will knew no obstacles, but found or made a way straight to the mark. Alberoni was all anxiety to avoid war in 1717, but war becoming inevitable, he "bent all his energies," says a historian of it, "to its successful prosecution," and showed himself no imitator of some preceding Spanish ministers, who, in difficult circumstances, had left all for the saints to do, or their allies. Earl Stanhope has a note of admiration for the contrast between Washington's

first forbearance and his subsequent determination—his reluctance to draw the sword, and his “magnanimity in persevering.” His, it has been suggested, might fitly have been the motto which Spaniards of the old time and the old type used to engrave on their Toledo blades: “Never draw me without reason; never sheathe me without honour.” He decided surely, though he deliberated slowly. Pitt was declared at the time by those who knew him best, to have been dragged into the contest with France “with as much reluctance as a man of conscientious principles into a duel;” but when once forced into the conflict, he fought as for dear life. In no manner a man after his own heart was that prominent actor in the strife, the Duke of Brunswick, whom historians describe as bold even to rashness in the original conception of a campaign, but vacillating and irresolute when he came to carry it into execution. Pitt knew Wellington only as young Arthur Wellesley, but even as early as 1806, his last year of life, he was able to affirm that never had he met any military officer with whom it was so satisfactory to converse. “He states every difficulty before he undertakes any service, but none after he has undertaken it,” were the warm words of the dying statesman to his dear old friend Lord Wellesley, in praise of his brother Arthur. It was said by Prince Albert to be peculiar to Sir Robert Peel that, in great things, as in small, all the difficulties and objections occurred to him first: he would anxiously consider them, pause, and warn against rash resolutions; but, having convinced himself, after a long and careful investigation, that a step was right to be taken, “all his caution and apparent timidity changed into courage and power of action.” Happy the complete man that combines in himself what Beaumont and Fletcher’s Duke is for parcelling out between himself and his generals:

“Nor will we e’er be wanting in our counsels,
As we doubt not your action.”

Prompt energy of action following upon sage deliberation in counsels, is the way to win.

§ V.

CHARACTER BETOKENED BY DRESS.

Hamlet, Act i., Sc. 3.

POLONIUS has an eye to dress. He is observant of apparel, because he is a student of character ; and the apparel oft proclaims the man. And in this, as in other matters, the old politician finds it politic to preach up the golden mean. If the young man, his son, would get on in the world, let him pay a proper, but no improper, attention to costume. Let Laertes be careful to dress well, but never to be overdressed. Let him pay handsomely to look handsome ; but let him avoid exaggerated or "loud" garments, not less than sordid or squalid ones.

"Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy,
For the apparel oft proclaims the man."

The shrewd old Lafeu, of *All's Well that Ends Well*, distrusts young Bertram's friend, Parolles, from the moment he casts eyes on him. "But I hope your lordship thinks him not a soldier ? . . . Pray you, sir, who's his tailor ? . . . Believe this of me, There can be no kernel in this light nut ; the soul of this man is his clothes : trust him not in matter of heavy consequence." Chesterfield's affinity to Polonius as a paternal counsellor is elsewhere recognized in these pages ; and to *his* young Laertes that pink of politeness in the peerage writes : "Your dress (as insignificant a thing as dress is in itself) is now become an object worthy of some attention ; for I confess I cannot help forming some opinion of a man's sense and character from his dress ; and I believe most people do as well as myself." Any affectation whatsoever in dress, his lordship takes to imply a flaw in the understanding. Most of the young fellows he observed in London society displayed, to his eye, some character or other by their dress ; some affecting the tremendous, and wearing a big fiercely-cocked hat, an enormous sword, a short waistcoat, and a black cravat ; and these he professedly should

be almost tempted to swear the peace against, were he not convinced of their being but meek asses in lions' skins. Others he saw going in brown frocks, leather breeches, great oaken cudgels in their hands, their hats uncocked, and their hair unpowdered,—altogether imitating grooms, stage-coachmen, and country bumpkins so well in their outsides, that he made not the least doubt of their resembling them equally in their insides. A man of sense, he repeats, carefully avoids any particular character in his dress; he is accurately clean for his own sake; but all the rest is for other people's. "He dresses as well, and in the same manner, as the people of sense and fashion of the place where he is. If he dresses better, as he thinks, (that is, more) than they, he is a fop: if he dresses worse, he is unpardonably negligent." But of the two, Chesterfield would rather have a young fellow too much than too little dressed, because the excess on that side will wear off with a little age and reflection; but "if he is negligent at twenty, he will be a sloven at forty, and stink at fifty years old." Evelyn admired, and cited as "witty," the expression of Malvezzi, that garments (*vestimenti*) in animals are infallible signs of their nature; in men, of their understanding.*

* Evelyn's disdain of French foppery comes out strong in his *Tyrannus; or, the Mode*; one paragraph of which treatise on the absurdities of fashion begins: "Methinks a French taylor with an ell in his hand, looks like the enchantress Circe over the companions of Ulysses, and changes them into as many formes." And another opens with a picture of "a fine silken thing which I spied walking th' other day, through Westminster Hall, that had as much ribbon about him as would have plundered six shops, and set up twenty country pedlars; all his body was drest like a Maypole, or a Tom o' Bedlam's cap," etc. Not less hearty was this model English gentleman in his scorn, than was that German of the Germans, Jean Paul F. Richter, in his avowed "innate disgust to dandies (though quite contrary was his feeling towards finely-dressed women), so that he often looked at the flugelman of dress in the *Journal des Modes* with the sole view of rousing his bile against them." There figures in one of his fictions a *muscadin* upon whose waistcoat—according to the then prevailing fashion—was embroidered a whole menagerie, or Zimmerman's zoological map; whose pocket-handkerchief was a great Molucca, and his two locks two little Moluccas full of perfume; while profiles, pictures,

It is written in the words of Jesus the son of Sirach : " A man's attire, and excessive laughter, and gait, show what he is." Treating in the pulpit of superficial character, of persons all whose work and all whose nature is on the surface, Frederick Robertson said, " The very dress of such persons betrays the slatternly, incomplete character of their minds." To cite a fruity couplet from the *Urania* of Dr. O. W. Holmes,

" The outward forms the inner man reveal,—
We guess the pulp before we cut the peel."

In making good or bad taste in dress an infallible criterion of social elegance or deformity, the elder Schlegel was careful to limit his rule to the age in which the fashion came up ; for it may sometimes be very difficult to overturn a wretched fashion even when, in other things, a better taste has long prevailed. The dresses of the ancients, he observes, were more simple, and consequently less subject to change of fashion,—the male dress, in particular, being almost unchangeable. Even from the dresses alone, as we see them in the remains of antiquity, he asserts the possibility of forming a pretty accurate judgment of the character of the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans. " What we harmony do call," sings Ben Jonson, " in a body, should be there ;

Well he should his clothes too wear,
Yet no tailor help to make him ;
Dress'd, you still for man should take him,
And not think he'd eat a stake,
Or were set up in a brake,"

whatever that last phrase may import.* " His robes sat well upon him," writes John Marston Hall of a certain French dignitary,—" which is always a sign of a lofty

stones, even beetles' wings, were all employed in the "gold-shoeing" of his beringed fingers. Jean Paul takes care to hit him hard throughout.

* Besides meaning a thicket of bushes, "brake" is used for a snaffle for horses, and for a wooden frame to restrain the legs of vicious ones while being shod ; either of which senses is more seemingly pertinent than the other accepted ones of an engine of torture, and an instrument for dressing flax.

education or of a fine mind ; for no one can feel himself perfectly at ease in all his movements, without possessing the one, or having received the other." That reminds us of another clause in the Chesterfield chapter of instructions. When once well dressed for the day, let his pupil think no more of it afterwards ; and without any fear of discomposing his dress, let all his motions be as easy and natural as if he had no clothes on at all. Whether Philip Stanhope's every motion in that case would or could have been easy and natural, may at the least be doubted.

" Each Bond Street buck conceits, unhappy elf !
He shows his clothes : alas, he shows himself !
O that they knew, these over-drest self-lovers,
What hides the body, oft the mind uncovers."

So wrote Coleridge in his Poets' Corner days. And Charles Kingsley, in days when the word "sacrament" was very frequently at his pen's point, pronounced dress to be a sort of sacrament, a sure sign of the wearer's character : according as any one is orderly, or modest, or tasteful, or joyous, or brilliant, those excellences, or the want of them, are sure to show themselves, in the colours they choose, and the cut of their garments. Often in the work-room used Alton Locke, tailor and poet, to amuse himself over the clothes he was making, by speculating from them on the sort of people the wearers were to be ; and he flattered himself he was not often wrong. Merle d'Aubigné is careful to tell us of Calvin, that his dress, equally remarkable for its great neatness and its perfect simplicity, indicated habits of order and native modesty. So again is Conyers Middleton to tell us of Cicero, that in his dress, "which the wise have usually considered as an index of the mind," he observed what he prescribes in his *De Officiis*, a "modesty and decency, adapted to his rank and character : a perpetual cleanliness, without the appearance of pains ; free from the affectation of singularity, and avoiding the extremes of a rustic negligence and foppish delicacy." Cortés was noted for dressing plainly, with exceeding neatness, but always in the fashion of the time : rich, not

gaudy, was his rule. Ill-fashioned garments, observes Hartley Coleridge, have always more or less of this fault—you can neither wear them, nor see them worn, without thinking of them: but the best and most graceful offend on the same ground, if, however well-made, they be very much out of the fashion, or any way unsuitable to the age, rank, or character of the wearer. "It is possible to dress too plain for modesty." Lamartine, who is particular in describing the dress of many of the Girondins and victims of the Terror, calls our attention to Brissot as clad with "affected simplicity," in a threadbare black cloak cut mathematically to cover the limbs of a man; to Lasource in his plain black coat, and Genonné in his elegant and carefully chosen costume, made in proscribed shape and of proscribed stuff. *He* would be, to the last, the gentleman, to those who had proscribed the use of any such word, and indeed the mere existence of any such being, yet in whose eyes the dress is apt to make the gentleman.

Mr. Mayhew, in the course of his back-street and byway researches in London life and labour, was assured by one informant, in regard of a "gentleman" who drove a roaring trade in the hot-eel line, in Clare Market, that, "on a Sunday, anybody would think him the first nobleman in the land, to see him dressed in his white hat, with black crape round it, and his drab paletot and mother-o'-pearl buttons, and black kid gloves, with the fingers too long for him." The Commissioner's informant would presumably have been slow to follow Mr. Trollope's description of Mr. Manylopes, whom, though every article he wore was good, and most of them such as gentlemen wear, no man alive could have mistaken for a gentleman. Hajji Baba in England was puzzled how to judge of people by their dress, so misleading was any such criterion—those who drove the coaches in the streets, and those who stood behind them, being by far the finest dressed people he could see. "In grandfather's time," writes Jerrold's epistolary tailor, "gentlemen were known to be gentlemen by their coats. They walked about clothed and marked as superior people; there

was no mistake in them, and the lower orders knew their betters by their satins, their velvets, and their gold lace. Now, sir, how are we to know a gentleman? There is no mark, no difference in him: we can only come at his gentility by his manners; a very roundabout way, sir; and one that has led to a great many mistakes." Mr. Stitchington would like to know as a master-tailor, how it is to be hoped that common folks are to respect the House of Lords, when he every day of his life sees a Duke pass his door to Parliament in a pepper-and-salt linsey-woolsey, duffel, flannel sort of thing, that his tailor, try as hard as he may, can't charge him more than two pounds for. It was never intended, this remonstrant argues, that the lines of society should be so finely drawn by the tailor, that you could not see them; and because it is so, you now have, on his showing, all sorts of discontent, no stability in trade, and no real morals in gentlemen. No real wit either, he might perchance have added, if conversant with the style of his fellow-craftsman Fashioner, in Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*:

"Believe it, sir,
That clothes do much upon the wit, as weather
Does on the brain; and thence, sir, comes your proverb,
'The tailor makes the man.' I speak by experience
Of my own customers. I have had gallants,
Both court and country, would have fool'd you up
In a new suit, with the best wits in being,
And kept their speed as long as their clothes lasted
Handsome and neat; but then as they grew out
At the elbows again, or had a stain or spot,
They have sunk most wretchedly."*

Autolycus had declined to fight with the Bohemian shepherd's son the other day, because that pugnaciously disposed clown was no gentleman born; but the clown is no sooner in possession of goodly array than he asserts himself

* An essayist on the theme of Outward Adornment insists not only that an ill-dressed man will never be so much at his ease as one who is well-dressed, but that he will not "think" so highly or so well—to say nothing more of the mean and shabby ways that a mean and shabby appearance gives a man.

gentleman absolute on the strength of it. "See you these clothes? say, you see them not, and think me still no gentleman born: you were best say, these robes are not gentleman born." "I know, you are now, sir, a gentleman born," Autolycus humbly acquiesces. Petruchio scorns such vulgar logic: he and his Kate are to go visiting in their present shabby but "honest mean habiliments:" what though they both figure in "garments poor"? he, wilful man, at present loves to have it so:

"For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
So honour peareth in the meanest habit."

The sweet look of goodness which sat upon my uncle Toby's brow assimilated everything around it so sovereignly to itself, and Nature had "wrote Gentleman with so fair a hand in every line of his countenance," that, by his nephew's account, even his tarnished gold-laced hat and huge cockade of flimsy taffety became him; and, though not worth a button in themselves, yet "the moment my uncle Toby put them on, they became serious objects, and altogether seemed to have been picked up by the hand of Science to set him off to advantage."* When the tattered refugee Caius Marcius is found to be very Coriolanus, the servants' hall talk, among the retainers of Aufidius, is in this strain: "By my hand," protests one fellow, "I had thought to have stricken him with a cudgel; and yet my mind gave me, his clothes made a false report of him." "Off, off, you lendings," is crazy Lear's style, as he begins to unstrip, after considering well the uncovered body of Poor Tom, who

* Like the lassie in Burns:

"And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel."

Innate nobility asserts itself through any vesture, and the man looks well in spite of the worst. As with the stranger guests in Scott's *Lord of the Isles*:

"For though the costly furs
That erst had deck'd their caps were torn,
And their gay robes were overworn,
And soil'd their gilded spurs,

owed the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool; and yet might be, like his prince of darkness, a gentleman. "Know'st me not by my clothes?" is Cloten's wrathful address to that "villain base," Guiderius, when they meet and fight before the cave; and the king's son answers the queen's son offhand,

"No, nor thy tailor, rascal,
Who is thy grandfather; he made those clothes,
Which, as it seems, make thee."

Honest Kent, in *Lear*, tells that finical rogue Oswald, Goneril's steward, "A tailor made thee!" "A tailor make a man?" is Cornwall's query; and Kent re-asserts the paradox, with extra emphasis. One of Overbury's Characters laughs at every man whose band sits not well, or that hath not a fair shoe-tye, and he is ashamed to be seen in any man's company that wears not his clothes well: "His very essence he placeth in his outside, and his chiefest prayer is, that his revenues may hold out for taffeta cloaks in the summer, and velvet in the winter." Another of them had rather have the whole commonwealth out of order than the "least member of his muchato, and chooses rather to lose his patrimony than to have his band ruffled." Christopher North professes, "My happiness is in the hands of my tailor. In a perfectly well-cut coat and faultless pair of breeches, I am in heaven—a wrinkle on my pantaloons puts me into purgatory—and a," *cætera desint*. The humour of the avowal turns perhaps on the exquisite inapplicability of all this to Professor Wilson, the man in the mask. Not Doctor Donne as the original satirist, not Alexander Pope

Yet such a high commanding grace
Was in their mien and in their face,
As suited best the princely dais
And royal canopy."

And so with a knight of the round table in one of the *Idylls of the King*:

"Yniol's rusted arms
Were on his princely person, but thro' these
Princelike his person shone."

Colonel Newcome's twelve-year old blue swallow-tail coat, with very high velvet collar, and as high a waist, made him look odd, but the gentleman was apparent throughout.

as the amending and modernizing one, could have felt a heartier contempt than he for the Fopling tribe :

“ See them survey their limbs by Durer’s rules,
Of all beau-kind the best-proportion’d fools !
Adjust their clothes, and to confession draw
Those venial sins, an atom or a straw ;
But oh, what terrors must distract the soul
Convicted of that mortal crime, a hole !
Or should one pound of powder less bespread
Those monkey-tails that wag behind their head.”

It may be very sad, the having to admit that the tailor does in great part make the man ; but Mr. Trollope, for one, fears it to be undoubtedly the fact. Could the Chancellor, he asks, look dignified on the woolsack, if he had had an accident with his wig, or allowed his robes to be torn or soiled ? and “ does not half the piety of a bishop reside in his lawn sleeves, and all his meekness in his anti-virile apron ? ”* The reflection occurs in the account of Herbert Fitzgerald’s mistake in going to Desmond Castle on foot, through the mud and rain, instead of having out his best pair of horses, and brushing his hair well, and anointing himself, and donning his rich Spanish cloak, and seeing to it that his hat was brushed and his boots spotless. The countess would surely then have lacked the courage to turn him from the house as she did. *In vili veste nemo tractatur honeste.* At the mansion described by Byron in Blank-Blank Square, welcome guests were some who had but talent for their crest ; or wealth, which is a passport everywhere ; or even mere fashion, “ which indeed’s the best

Recommendation ;—and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.”

It is astonishing, philosophizes the Caxtonian Riccabocca, what a difference it makes in the ideas people form of us, according as our coats are cut one way or another. “ Nothing is more true than that a tailor is often the

* “ I confess that when I heard the Bishop of Oxford [Wilberforce] preach, I thought the effect of his sermon was increased by the decorous and careful fashion in which he was arrayed in his robes.”—A. K. H. B., *Leisure Hours in Town*, p. 279.

making of a man." The Rev. Dr. Boyd, already quoted in a footnote, affirms the aspect of the male sex, "such as it is," to be "mainly made by their tailors. And it is a lamentable thought, how very ill the clothes of most men are made." There is in Mr. Pepys' Diary an entry bearing date October 19, 1661, which concerns his sensations at a handsome dinner at Limehouse; "I not being neat in clothes, which I find a great fault in me, could not be so merry as otherwise, and at all times I am, and can be, when I am in good habitt, which makes me remember my father Osborne's rule for a gentleman, to spare in all things rather than that." Ought it not to have been his own father's rule too? for the elder Pepys was a tailor. And sooth to say, the tailor's son showed himself well disposed to act upon the rule. He might be right in accusing himself of "not being neat;" but even in that age of showy clothes, few men if any loved more dearly a showy suit than did Samuel Pepys.*

* Witness the perpetually recurring references to dress in the Diary, from almost the first page of it. For "January 1st (Lord's day)," 1659-60, has this to begin with: "Put on my suit with great skirts." Then on the 22nd, "This day I began to put buckles to my shoes." Feb. 2, "Put on my white suit, with silver lace coat." May 24, "Up and made myself as fine as I could, with the linen stockings on and wide canons that I bought the other day at Hague." 31st, "A pair of silk stockings of a light blue, which I was much pleased with," as a present. July 1st, "This morning came home my fine camlet cloak, with gold buttons, and a silk suit, which cost me much money, and I pray God to make me able to pay for it"—a naturally sincere prayer on the part of a tailor's son.—Every few pages, again, we light on such entries as the following: "This morning my brother Tom brought me my jackanapes coat with silver buttons;" "Come one from my father's with a black cloth coat, made of my short cloak, to walk up and down in;" "Bought some greene-watered Moyre, for a morning wastecoate;" "Feb. 3rd (Lord's day). This day I first begun to go forth in my coate and sword, as the manner among gentlemen now is;" "Put on my gray cloth suit and faced white coate, made of one of my wife's pettycoates;" "This day [Oct. 13, 1661, Lord's day] left off half-skirts, and put on a wastecoate, and my false taby wastecoate with gold lace;" "This day I put on my half cloth black stockings and my new coate of the fashion, which pleases me well;" "This night my new camelott riding coate to my coloured cloth suit came home;" "Come my

Master Frank Leigh is described in *Westward Ho!* as dressed in the very extravagance of the fashion,—not so much from vanity as from “that delicate instinct of self-respect which would keep some men spruce and spotless from one year’s end to another upon a desert island.” Dean Swift was in his person neat and clean even to superstition,

brother Tom to me. We did resolve of putting me into a better garbe, and among other things, to have a good velvet cloak,—that is, of cloth, lined with velvet, and other things modish, and a perruque;” “Have made myself a velvet cloak, two new cloth shirts, . . . a new shag gown, trimmed with gold buttons and twist, with a new hat, and silk tops for my legs, and many other things, being resolved henceforward to go like myself. And also two perriwigs, one whereof cost me 3*l.*, and the other 40*s.* I have worn neither yet, but will begin next week, God willing.” —Nov. 29, 1663: “(Lord’s day.) This morning I put on my best black cloth suit, trimmed with scarlett ribbon, very neat, with my cloak lined with velvett, and a new beaver, which altogether is very noble, with my black silk knit canons I bought a month ago.” “To Mr. Creed’s lodgings, talking mightily of the convenience and necessity of a man’s wearing good clothes, after eating a messe of creame.” (The obscurity of the *post hoc* is almost as rich as the cream.) “Bought my cloth, coloured, for a suit and cloak, to line with plush. I find that I must go handsomely, whatever it costs me.” “My tailor [not Pepys père] brings me home my fine, new, coloured cloth suit, . . . as good a suit as ever I wore in my life, and mighty neat, to my great content.” “Mr. Sheres [but no tailor, despite his counsel and his name] helped me to choose a summer suit of coloured camelott, coat and breeches, and a flowered tabby coat, very rich.” “My taylor’s man brings my vest home, and coat to wear with it, and belt, and silver-hilted sword; so I rose and [Lord’s day] dressed myself, and I like myself mightily in it, and so do my wife.” “(Lord’s day). To church, and with my mourning, very handsome, and new perriwigg, make a great show.” “To my tailor’s; and then to the belt-makers, where my belt cost me 55*s.*, of the colour of my new suit.” But in the merry month of May, 1669, Mr. Pepys finds, to his vexation, that his gorgeous array is getting to be the talk of the town, and this not admiringly, but disparagingly, and he is frightened into self-denial. “Povy told me of my gold-laced sleeves in the Park yesterday, which vexed me also, so as to resolve never to appear in Court with them but presently to have them taken off, as it is fit I should, and so called at my tailor’s for that purpose.” Prudence was no absentee among Pepys’s household gods, and if he loved well to “come out,” so he knew well when to pull up.

He had been going a little too far in the direction of royal Richard’s

and appeared regularly dressed in his gown every morning, to receive the visits of even his most intimate friends. John Wesley was always scrupulously neat in his person, and enforced upon his followers the necessity of personal neatness, stringent as were his invectives against extravagance in dress. Whitefield, on the other hand, at one period, thought that "Christianity required him to *go nasty*." * He had not then at least laid to heart George Herbert's precept :

resolve, to be at charges for a looking-glass, and entertain a score or two of tailors, to study fashions to adorn his body. At one time he seemed on the highway to emulate, by anticipation, that "most rising man of Saxony, once a page," who figures so disadvantageously in Mr. Carlyle's great history, the Graf von Brühl, first favourite and factotum to August III., and remarkable, if for nothing else, surely so for his three hundred and sixty-five fashionable suits of clothes. (*Montrez-moi des vertus, pas des culottes*,—"Have you no virtues, then, to show me; nothing but pairs of breeches?" exclaimed an impatient French traveller, led about in Brühl's palace one day; presumably a *virtuoso* who desiderated other articles of *vertu* than these.) Coleridge professed to have known persons so anxious to have their dress become them, as to convert it at length into their proper self, and thus actually to become the dress. "Such a one (safeliest spoken of by the neuter noun), I consider but as a suit of live finery. It is indifferent whether we say—it becomes he, or, he becomes it."

* By his own account, Whitefield, at Oxford, affected mean apparel, made himself remarkable by leaving off powder in his hair, when every one else was powdered; and wore woollen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes, as visible signs of humility. Wesley's monitions to the humblest of his followers were: "Let none ever see a ragged Methodist." "Avoid all nastiness, dirt, slovenliness, both in your person, clothes, house, and all about you." Said George Herbert,

"Slovens take up their stock of noisomeness
Beforehand, and anticipate their last hour."

This must have been in Wesley's mind when he penned the pungent precept (addressed to one of his Irish preachers), "Do not stink above ground!" A chapter on distinguished slovens might prove, however, a long and copious one. It would include Oliver Cromwell, as Sir Philip Warwick saw and took note of him in the Parliament of 1640, in a very homely suit, seemingly made by an "ill country tailor;" his linen "not very clean." So again South described him as "first entering the parliament house, with a threadbare torn cloak and a greasy hat (and perhaps neither of them paid for)." Oliver, at any rate, was not for doing things by halves; there was nothing, about *him*, of Pope's "half

“Let thy mind’s sweetness have its operation
Upon thy person, clothes, and habitation.”

Are Bishops generally dandies? asks one of the wits (for they are many) in *Wheat and Tares*. “Yes,” answers him

beau, half sloven,” his wig all powder, and all snuff his band; a wight whose coat and breeches strangely vary, “White gloves, and linen worthy Lady Mary.” (Of her ladyship, by-the-bye, Horace Walpole wrote some twenty years after Pope was dead and gone, that her dirt as well as her vivacity was on the increase—her dress being thin, like her languages, a galimatias of several countries; “the groundwork rags, and the embroidery nastiness:” for cap, she then wore an old black hood, for gown a dimity petticoat, and slippers for shoes.) Sir Matthew Hale, in his younger days at the bar, is said to have neglected his dress so much, that he was once taken by a pressgang, as a very proper man indeed from their point of view (for there was a strong well-built frame inside of that shabby garb). But long before he rose to the bench he had improved his style, and never, as a judge, was noted for utter disregard of appearances, like the first Lord Kenyon, for instance. Clarendon records of Doctor Earles, than whom no man was more cultivated in his behaviour and discourse, that “no man was more negligent in his dress.” The slovenliness for which Isaac Barrow was notorious as a schoolboy, marked him to the last, and sometimes told against him even ludicrously with the vulgar. Vincent Bourne was such a sloven, said Cowper (who dearly loved Vinny) “as if he had trusted to his genius as a cloak for everything that could disgust you in his person.” Johnson astounded his familiars by coming out on one grand occasion in quite respectable garb, discarding for the nonce his rusty brown coat and soiled shirt and shrivelled little wig: he said he did so to give Goldsmith a better example; for Goldy, he heard, had been justifying his disregard of cleanliness and decency by quoting the practice of the greater doctor.

Magliabecchi was a sloven *ne plus ultra*. Visitors were equally astounded by his linguistic acquirements and his worse than shabby attire. To Boswell, at his first visit, Dr. Johnson’s brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; his little old shrivelled unpowdered wig was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and the knees of his small-clothes were loose; his black worsted stockings were but partially drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. “But all these slovenly peculiarities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk.” Mere dandies have been called the cut flowers in a bouquet, for, once faded, they can never reblossom; and in the drawing-room, as everywhere else, Mind in the long-run prevails. “And, O well-booted Achaian!” thus the noble author of the *Parisians* apostrophizes one of them,—“yon sloven, thick-shoed and with cravat awry, whose mind, as he hurries by the bow-window at White’s, sows each fleeting moment with thoughts which grow

another, "and all other great men besides. Blucher, Napoleon, and Wellington have given names to boots, no doubt because they had a *penchant* in that direction. Dick Turpin spent all his takings upon his toilet, and Lord Erskine made

not blossoms for bouquets, but corn-sheaves for garners, will, before he is forty, be far more in the fashion than you. He is commanding the time out of which you are fading." But O the pity of it, when the sloven, though man of genius, is also a sot. Like Porson, whose whole appearance, we are told, denoted excessive and habitual dissipation, and whose clothes and linen were so disreputably dirty that servants were reluctant to admit him into their masters' houses even when they knew him to have been expressly invited. William Emerson, the eminent mathematician, who might have claimed a place in Hartley Coleridge's *Biographia Borealis*, if that delightful book had better received its deserts and fulfilled its name, was not less "fancifully coarse in his dress" than discourteous in his conversation. Smithson Tennant, the chemist, who might also have secured a section among those Northern Worthies, was another noteworthy for extreme negligence of dress. Everything about him might have been interpreted, by Rosalind's code of signals, to demonstrate a careless desolation—such as hose ungartered, bonnet unbanded, sleeve unbuttoned, and shoe untied; but the tokens would have been misinterpreted in his case. The elder Mathews closes the third chapter of his autobiography with this reference to Rowland Hill: "So inattentive was he to nicety in dress, that I have seen him enter my father's house with one red slipper and one shoe; the knees of his breeches untied, and the strings dangling down his legs." Walter Scott as a young man was quizzed by his companions for the slovenliness of his dress,—in particular for a certain considerably glazed pair of corduroy breeches; but he soon changed for the better, and Lockhart even declares him to have been a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcombries of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, including those "bedgown and slipper tricks," as he called them, "in which literary men are apt to indulge." He would have joined Balzac in denouncing that neglect of dress which is apt to grow upon those who rusticate or vegetate in provincial seclusion, "*où l'on arrive insensiblement à ne plus s'habiller les uns pour les autres.*" As to Parisian *littérateurs*, his sympathies, *quâ* costume, would have been all with the well-equipped Armand Carrel, whose taste in dress was watched for and followed by those observant of such matters, and not with Gustave Planche, almost ostentatiously careless of them. General Airey, roughing it in Canada, would have been a man to his mind, because, however coarsely clad during the working hours of the day, and only to be distinguished from the other workmen by his greater activity and endurance, he was always to be found transformed in the evening, by

his finest speeches in primrose gloves." Of Tasso we read in Goethe,

"The fine-spun linen, the embroider'd vest,
He weareth gladly, nor will he endure
Upon his person aught of texture rude,
Such as befits the menial. For with him
All must be rich and noble, fair and good."

Grant him mad ; at any rate he observed this method in his madness. And "mad-doctors" tell us, from Hanwell and Colney Hatch observation, that as, among the sane, self-respect is increased by the possession of decent clothes, so is the lunatic often still more amenable to their influence—high-coloured as his taste may be ; for he sometimes has a taste for very high colours.*

what Mr. Kinglake calls a "rigorous change in his dress." So with Hartley Coleridge : those who had only seen him in the careless dress that he chose to adopt in the lanes, his trousers, which "were generally too long," observes an observant neighbour, doubled half-way up the leg, unbrushed, and often splashed ; his hat brushed the wrong way, for he never used an umbrella ; and his wild, unshaven weatherbeaten look—were "amazed at the metamorphose into such a faultless gentleman as he appeared when he was dressed for the evening." Lady Holland bears record of her father, the Rev. Sydney Smith, that his neckcloth always looked like a pudding tied round his throat, and that the arrangement of his garments seemed more the result of accident than design—yet he "always looked like a gentleman, in its best sense,—that is, as one who deserved respect." If Beethoven was a thorough sloven in his dress, he had the gentleman's instinct of personal cleanliness, being "a perfect Mussulman in the frequency of his ablutions." No such compensation clause can be alleged in behalf of Porson, who, as we have seen, if Rogers is a trustworthy reporter, was generally dirty as well as ill-dressed. De Quincey contrasts the "slovenly dress" of Wordsworth's middle and philosophic life with the powdered hair and silk stockings and point device costume of his Cambridge days.

* A Quarterly Reviewer, discussing the subject of Lunatic Asylums, condemns the "gray prison dress" long favoured by the metropolitan county asylums, and the smock-frock provided in the majority of country ones. Dr. Webster, in his notes on foreign lunatic asylums, published in the *Psychological Journal of Medicine*, speaks approvingly of the bright head-dresses and shawls used in France. Dr. Wynter tells us significantly that, at Hanwell, patients are rewarded for good conduct by allowing them to wear a fancy waistcoat. How much better than a strait one !

The first Lord Lytton, in his later life, affirmed a gentleman's taste in dress to be, upon principle, the avoidance of all things extravagant. It consists, he said, in the quiet simplicity of exquisite neatness. "But, as the neatness must be a neatness in fashion, employ the best tailor; pay him ready money, and on the whole you will find him the cheapest." Some readers may be dubious as to the meaning of "quiet simplicity" from so foremost a man of fashion as the author of *Pelham*. But the man's tastes altered as well as the author's, and Pisistratus Caxton would affect another style of dress than Ernest Maltravers or Godolphin. At any period of his life, however, one would infer his elective affinity to have been rather towards Raleigh, who, in an age of magnificence of dress, was conspicuous for his splendour, and towards Sully, whose love of display in his apparel has been taken for an indication of something imaginative peeping out from under his stern practical character, than to say, such a man as Mahomet, of whom one biographer writes: "He indulged in no magnificence of apparel, the ostentation of a petty mind; neither was his simplicity in dress affected, but the result of a real disregard to distinction from so trivial a source. His garments were sometimes of wool; sometimes of the striped cotton of Yemen; and were often patched."* Patchwork he might wear, but the patches were *purpurei panni* in the eyes of the faithful, who deemed him every inch a king. And kings and emperors there have been, men of mettle too, whose dress would not have fetched more in Monmouth Street than the cast-off raiment of the Prophet. If the great Constantine, in old age, took to wearing false hair of various colours, and a variegated flowing robe of silk, most curiously embroidered with flowers of gold, and a profusion of gems and pearls,

* Ali, again, when invested, twenty-four years after the death of Mahomet, with the regal and sacerdotal office, repaired to the mosque of Medina in a thin cotton gown, with a coarse turban on his head. Omar was notable, or notorious, for a gown that was torn or tattered in twelve places—"an old tattered habit of hair-cloth," the historian Tábari calls it.

of collars and bracelets, such as Gibbon deems "scarcely to be excused by the youth and folly of Elagabalus,"—on the other hand Julian, with the fopperies, affected to renounce the decencies of dress, and seemed to value himself for his neglect of the laws of cleanliness. If the sumptuous robes of Diocletian and his successors were of silk and gold, and even their shoes were studded with the most precious gems,—on the other hand the Emperor Carus, when he received the Persian ambassadors, confined the announcement of his dignity to a coarse woollen garment of purple. If we see in one picture, of Rogers's painting, Murat King of Naples displaying his fine figure indoors, in a Spanish cloak, hat and feathers, yellow boots, pink pantaloons, and a green waistcoat; or in evening dress, with roses in his shoes, a white plume in his hat, and his hair prodigiously curled and frizzed, with a long love-lock hanging down on each side;—in another we see a Frederick the Great, in the shabbiest, snuffiest of habiliments, or a Charles the Twelfth, in the coarsest of black and blue, or an imperial Charles the Fifth, in the dingiest of dismal black alone. "Was Charles the Twelfth, think you," asked Johnson of Boswell, "less respected for his coarse blue coat and black stock? And you find the King of Prussia dresses plain, because the dignity of his character is sufficient." No account taken here of the Homeric argument, that

"A dignity of dress adorns the great,

And kings draw lustre from the robe of state."

Another memorable exemplar of royalty in undress is Lewis the Eleventh, whose ordinary jerkin, hose, and cloak were worn so threadbare, that only a sovereign prince or a very rich man could have afforded to wear them. Magnificent in surroundings as his adversary Charles of Burgundy could be when it so pleased him, he too was noted at times for coarseness of dress, as well as of manners. Neither the fiery duke nor the coldly calculating king seems to have been beforehand with Don Quixote in his persuasion, enforced on the Governor of Barataria, that it is often expedient and necessary, for the due support of authority, to act in contradiction

to the humility of the heart ; and that the personal adornments of one in high office must correspond with his status : " Let thy apparel, therefore, be good and becoming ; for the hedge-stake, when decorated no longer, appears what it really is." Rudolf of Hapsburgh held an opposite view, and arrayed himself accordingly : he was for being kingly in virtues and unpretending in apparel. So was Kaiser Albert V., the Grave, and the Magnanimous—for he is known by both epithets ; and Frederick III. was another of the plain-dressed kaisers, though he would wear fine things to do the state some service. Maximilian II. loved plain dress as much as he did simple fare, and never purchased a single trinket for his own use.

But we return to some miscellaneous examples of students of the art and adepts in the practice of personal adornment. A very unimpassioned writer speaks of Buffon's fondness for dress as amounting almost to a passion ; and is puzzled at the fact of such an intellect as his finding time in the midst of the severest studies to submit his head to the friseur often twice and sometimes thrice in the day, and to make his toilet in the extreme of the fashion. For painters and pronounced students of the fine arts, this sort of thing may be all very well ; a Breughel is welcome to adopt the most magnificent apparel, and to be known as " Velvet Breughel " accordingly ; and a Richard Cosway to be a sort of modern Parrhasius, as gorgeous in his personal attire as in the furniture of his house. But a Buffon,—well, Buffon was a Frenchman after all, and perhaps before all. Benjamin Constant, if slovenly at one period of his existence, turned exquisite at another : " Benjamin est de tous les muscadins du pays le plus élégant sans doute," wrote one sympathetic observer.* Robespierre's prim and dainty dress was a sort of protest against the filthy raggedness

* During his *liaison* with Madame de Charrière, Benjamin Constant had been negligent of dress, and *elle lui passait volontiers le négligé*. When she saw him turn dandy, *devenir muscadin*, she one day piteously and upbraidingly addressed him : " Benjamin, you attend to your dress now ; you no longer love me ! "

of the *sans-culottes*. All the more acceptable to him was René-Dumas for being a bit of a dandy in his way—though the gala-dress of this refined republican was a coat of blood-red hue, set off or relieved by ruffles of the purest white.* The Sea-green Incorruptible would, perhaps, have trimmed between our old Puritans and Cavaliers in the article of dress; holding with the former that lace, perfumes, and jewellery on a man are marks of unmanly foppishness and vanity, and that it is absurd, if not sinful, for a man to carry his income on his back, and bedizen himself out in reds, blues, and greens, ribbons, knots, slashes, and the like. The Puritans held (with the Spaniards, then, says Charles Kingsley, the finest gentlemen in the world), that sad, that is dark colours were the fittest for stately and earnest gentlemen. Colonel Hutchinson, by the testimony of his devoted Lucy, was “always very neatly habited, for he wore good and rich clothes, and had a variety of them, and had them well suited and every way answerable; in that little thing showing both good judgment and great generosity, he equally becoming them and they him, which he wore with such equal unaffectedness and such neatness as we do not often meet in one.” Not Feltham’s is the resolve, but it is worthy of him, and of Lucy Hutchinson, though later than either of them by two centuries: “I will always dress as neatly as possible, having frequently observed that ill-humour for the whole day has been owing to the petty discomforts of a slovenly dress. Besides, neatness in dress both indicates and assists regulation of character.” Royal ladies such as Isabella the Catholic have been distinguished for a similar disregard of show, while studious of a tasteful simplicity; Mr. Prescott contrasting

* Of Saint-Just, again, M. Fleury tells us, that “ce jeune homme blond, à la coiffeur soignée,” used to wear, when in full dress, “un habit de couleur chamois, avec une vaste cravate qu’attachait un nœud d’une prétentieuse négligence. Son grand gilet blanc se fermait sur une culotte gris-tendre, et il avait souvent un œillet rouge à la boutonnière.” *Rouge* would have been the colour best beseeeming his coat, like that of René-Dumas.

his Spanish heroine, for instance, with England's Elizabeth, whose fondness for dress and tawdry magnificence of ornament he calls ridiculous, or disgusting, according to the different periods of life in which it was indulged. Ferdinand was still less disposed than his wife to expenditure on sumptuous attire, and he let slip no opportunity of rebuking the opposite spirit of ostentation in his nobles; as when he turned to an over-dressed courtier, and exclaimed, laying his hand on his own doublet, "Excellent stuff this: it has lasted me three pairs of sleeves." Elizabeth's favourite, Leicester, astounded the Netherlanders by the "great magnificence and splendour of his dress," rustling in satin and feathers, with jewels in his ears, and his velvet toque stuck airily on the side of his head; for those plain burghers had been used, as Mr. Motley says, to "less gorgeous chieftains,"—Henry of Navarre, for instance, of whose clothes Fulke Greville (the Euphuist) declared, that a mean-born student of the Inns of Court would have been ashamed to walk about London streets in them. Then too there was their own William of Orange, who went about among the brewers and burghers with unbuttoned doublet and woollen bargeman's waistcoat. But the observant affirm that no rags or disguise can hide a certain nobility and presence in certain men—they look like noblemen in any circumstances. They may wear their clothes with a difference, Nature tells them, in Ophelia's phrase of the rue. So differentiates Sir Walter Scott between his Adam Hartley and Richard Middlemas—the clothes of the former being more expensive than those of his chum, but neither so tasteful when new, nor so well preserved when they began to grow old: sometimes he was too fine, sometimes too slovenly; and when too fine he looked rather too conscious of his splendour; whereas Dick was at all times regularly neat and well dressed—with a native air of good-breeding which made him appear always at ease; so that his dress, whatever it was, seemed to be just what he ought to have worn at the time. The "conscious" look of Adam Hartley reminds us of a modern essay-writer's

description of the peculiar look of people who are dressed up fine : it is not necessarily in the substance of their dress, for there may be many in the room much finer so far as material goes, yet who, carrying their silks and satins as unconcernedly as if they were fustians and cottons, being used to the wear, look natural, and so escape remark. It is the manner of wearing that betrays the sense of holiday clothes : it is the "anxiety over the whereabouts of the trailing train, the pride in the last new cut of coat or boddice, the painful responsibility of the glittering jewellery just bought, or only taken out to air on state occasions, and consequently lying like a heavy weight on the mind"—these are the things which show the consciousness some have of being dressed up fine, and the corresponding need of being as fine as their clothes ; for there is no ease about fine people conscious of their finery. In more senses than one might Buffon be right when "il croyait que le vêtement de l'homme fait partie de sa personne." Adam Hartley's alternation of slovenliness with splendour is characteristic with such men as Goldsmith, now rebuked for negligence by so neglectful a censor as Johnson, now challenging ridicule by his demonstrative doings in "rich sky-blew sattin" (*vide* his tailors' bills) and "clarett-colour'd" coat, and "rich Genoa velvett," and "superfine silver-laced small Hatt," and purple silk small-clothes, and handsome scarlet roquelaure buttoned close under the chin, and Mr. Filby's make of a pair of bloom-coloured breeches, and all the rest of it "in silk attire."* Minds as stern and masculine as Oliver's was the reverse, have cherished a weakness for an

* The Joseph Sedley of *Vanity Fair* is a type in fiction of the splendid sloven ; never well dressed, though he passed many hours daily in painful efforts to adorn his bulky person. "Like most fat men, he *would* have his clothes too tight, and took care that they should be of the most brilliant colours and youthful cut." His author's early *penchant* comes out, perhaps, in what is written of Clive Newcome : "A florid apparel becomes some men, as simple raiment suits others ; and Clive in his youth was of the ornamental class of mankind—a customer to tailors, a wearer of handsome rings, shirt-studs," etc.,—"nor could he help, in his costume or his nature, being picturesque and generous and splendid." So with

equal degree, if haply quite another kind, of sumptuous apparel. Lord Clive was fond of rich and gay clothing, and replenished his wardrobe with what Macaulay derides as "absurd profusion."* Was this harsh-featured, grim-visaged warrior the man to set up for a beau? But the beau proper, Beau Brummell for instance, is, as likely as not, superior to a weakness for anything high-coloured and *outré*. The Prince Regent's sometime guide, philosopher, and friend, instead of running riot in fantastical forms and colours, is said to have been a model of cleanliness, neatness, good taste, and exquisite propriety in dress, and to have held it a violation of every sound canon of æsthetics to be dressed in any way that attracted attention. Lovelace was talking rather after the manner of Polonius than that of the conventional man of fashion, when he said—though the figure smacks of the shopkeeper, and we taste Richardson in it—that we do but hang out a sign, in our dress, of what we have in the shop of our minds.

§ VI.

OBTRUSIVE ART.

Hamlet, Act ii., Sc. 2.

POLONIUS volunteers a promise to be brief, in his "exposition" or exposition of the way to deal with Hamlet. Brevity he defines to be the soul of wit, and wit, he flatters himself, he never was deficient in. Tediousness he calls the

Mr. Disraeli's *Young Duke*: "His Grace had a taste for magnificence in costume; but he was young, handsome, and a duke. Pardon him." Dukes are easily pardoned, young dukes especially.

* Sir John Malcolm gives us a letter worthy of Sir Matthew Mite, in which Clive orders "two hundred shirts, the best and finest that can be got for love or money." The contrast is piquant with the historical figure of Henry of Navarre, whose wardrobe consisted of a dozen shirts in all, and five pocket-handkerchiefs, most of them ragged.

"limbs and outward flourishes" of it ; and tedious he never suspected himself of being. Nevertheless, so far from brief the Queen finds his prolegomena, and so far gone in tediousness,—so pedantic and scholastic are his terms and his method, and so artificial and unsubstantial the process and the results of his chopping logic,—that she cannot refrain from a request for "more matter, with less art." "Madam, I swear I use no art at all," the inveterate proser reproachfully remonstrates, with a chafed haste of repudiation not unworthy of Sir Fretful Plagiary himself. Extremes meet, and excess of art may in effect touch upon utter artlessness. *Ars celare artem* is at any rate wanting in Polonius. So artful in his style that he is not master of arts enough to veil its sheer artificiality. If ever in his long life the lord chamberlain has been subjected to the slight of an uncalled-for interruption, it is, he believes, in her majesty's present call for more matter, with less art.

Polonius regards himself, with regard to this imputation, much as Acasto is made to do, in Otway's tragedy of the *Orphan* :

"You may have known that I'm no wordy man.
Fine speeches are the instruments of knaves,
Or fools, that use them when they want good sense,
But honesty
Needs no disguise or ornament."

Or, again, we may apply the diction of Signior Sylli in Massinger's *Maid of Honour* :

"You may, madam,
Perhaps believe that I in this use art ; . . .
But I, as I have ever done, deal simply."

Lewis the Eleventh, in *Quentin Durward*, pulls up Des Comines, much as Gertrude interrupts Polonius : "You are figurative," said Lewis, unable to restrain a show of peevishness ; "I am a dull blunt man, Sir of Comines. I pray you leave your tropes, and come to plain ground." Too sick at heart to be amused by Sir Dugald's airs of pedantic gallantry, and his airing of the classics, Annot Lyle, in the *Legend of Montrose*, interrupts him with, "If you would have the good-

ness to explain." "That, madam," replied Dalgetty, "may not be so easy, as I am out of the habit of construing—but we shall try." And with a will, after (Scoticè) putting shall for will, he does try. But the trial only provokes Mistress Annot to a renewed request that he will at once and in brief speak out his plain meaning in plain words. So again in the last chapter but one of *Waverley*, "Pray read short, sir," says the Colonel, when Macwheeble is mouthing and drawling out his array of law terms and technicalities. "On the conscience of an honest man, Colonel," protests the Bailie, "I read as short as is consistent with style."

Like another Polonius maunders on the verbose churchman in Kingsley's *Hereward*, till "it might seem strange that William [of Normandy], Taillebois, Guader, Warrenne, short-spoken, hard-headed, swearing warriors, could allow a complacently smooth churchman to dawdle on like this," counting the periods on his fingers, and seemingly never coming to the point. But they knew their man, and so let him go his own way, a roundabout one, and take his own time over it.

Polonius would seem never to have had a shade of mis-giving as to his power to keep his promise, "I will be brief." Dr. Dryasdust was almost equally self-complacent and self-asserting. He piqued himself on his ability *properare in mediam rem*, instead of dallying in the porch, and wearying his reader with long inductions: "As his Grace is wont to say of me wittily, 'No man tells a story so well as Dr. Dryasdust, when he has once got up to the starting-post.'" But then the getting there—*hic labor, hoc opus est*. "Fear me not, girl, I will be brief, unreasonably and unseasonably brief," pledges himself to Margaret the old Rotterdam physician in *Cloister and Hearth*. "And when a man's said what he means, he'd better stop," sententiously rules Mr. Poyser in *Adam Bede*—the goodman of whom his goodwife bears honourable testimony behind his back, "Not as I'm a-finding faut wi' my husband, for if he's a man o' few words, what he says he'll stand to." Plautus, or one of his *dramatis personæ* for him, calls it a tedious (nay, odious) way of

talking, to beat about the bush when you should be hitting the matter home : " Odiosa est oratio, cum rem agas, longinquum loqui." *Longinquum* loquacity is the dear delight of some long-winded bores. They have no taste whatever for the spirit and the meaning, though perhaps as ready as any to adopt the form and the phrase of the Horatian apology,

"Ne te longis ambagibus ultra
Quàm satis est morer."

Life is short ; why should speeches be long ? as Augustus Tomlinson has it. But orators are apt to reck not their own rede.

"Just as Cicero says he won't say this or that,
(A fetch, I must say, most transparent and flat,)
After saying whate'er he could possibly think of."*

Who is there, asks Dr. Maginn in his comment on this speech of Polonius, which, translated into Ciceronian Latin, would be worthy of Cicero himself,—who is there that has not heard promises of brevity made preludes to tediousness, and disclaimers of art vehicles of rhetorical flourish ? Polonius would probably have applauded the suggestion of one of our Elizabethan statesmen, commending the art of compressing a tiresome discourse into a few significant phrases,—that proverbs should be employed in diplomatic society. "Le sage est ménager du temps et des paroles," sings La Fontaine, who loved to iterate his praises of that very laudable economy. Thus, in the epilogue to another fable :

"Les longs ouvrages me font peur.
Loin d'épuiser une matière,
On n'en doit prendre que la fleur."

And, midway in the narration of another :

"Mais les ouvrages les plus courts
Sont toujours les meilleurs. En cela j'ai pour guides
Tous les maîtres de l'art."

The Polonian promise, "I will be brief," is excellent, if only it be kept ; but so many are ready with an *Ita faciam* to the

* J. R. Lowell : *A Fable for the Critics*.

Terentian *Quin tu uno verbo die.* Easier said than done.
.. *Quid verbis opus est?* is very easily indeed said.

“What need'st thou run so many miles about,
When thou may'st tell thy tale the nearest way?”

objects King Richard to bush-beating Stanley. And many a narrative poet has occasion to paraphrase the promise in the *Endymion* of John Keats,

“So will I in my story straightway pass
To more immediate matter.”

Very many more are the yawning readers that are fain to plead with Gertrude for more matter with less art. An admiring critic of the Latin epistles of Grosseteste, who compares them by advantageous contrast with the general tediousness of mediæval letters, is yet forced to own that Bishop Robert is not exempt from the prevailing sin, and that one wishes he would come sooner to the point, and give fewer quotations and illustrations from Scripture and the Fathers, from Aristotle and the Latin poets. It is the one complaint urged against the celebrated German mathematician and philosopher, J. C. von Wolff, by another appreciative critic, that he, Doctor Johann Christian, in stating a philosophical proposition which perhaps is self-evident, often exhibits a tedious demonstration in order that he may show its dependence on some more general theorem which precedes it; his developments being as a rule remarkable for their merciless prolixity.

When Dr. Battius expatiated, in technical terms of science, on a simple enough vexed question, “The man is given to speak in parables,” muttered the single-minded trapper, “but I conclude there is always some meaning hidden in his words, though it is as hard to find sense in his speeches, as to discover three eagles on the same tree.” King George the Second, according to Lord Waldegrave, had a quick conception, and expected that those who talked to him on business should come at once to the point. Now Pitt and Temple, being orators even in familiar conversation, endeavoured to convince His Majesty's judgment according to

the rules of rhetoric. So perhaps what is said in another section about there being nothing of Polonius about Pitt, ought to be qualified or withdrawn. John Locke professes to "have known a man unskilful in syllogism," who at first hearing could perceive the weakness and inconclusiveness of a long, artificial, and plausible discourse, wherewith others better skilled in syllogism had been much misled. And were it not for such, he goes on to say, "the debates of most princes' councils, and the business of assemblies, would be in danger to be mismanaged, since those who are relied upon, and have usually a great stroke in them, are not always such who have the good luck to be perfectly knowing in the forms of syllogism, or expert in mode and figure."

We are put in mind, too, of Polonius and his rhetorical art, by what Sir Philip Sidney says of "divers small learned courtiers" in whom he had undoubtedly discovered a sounder "stile" than in the pedantic possessors of larger erudition; of which, says he, "I can ghesse no other cause, but that the courtier . . . (though he know it not) doth *according* to art, though not *by* art; where the other using art to show art, and not hide art (as in these cases he should doe), flieth from nature, and indeed abuseth art."*

The function of true art is to hide art, on Sir Philip's showing, and not to obtrude it, as Polonius did. What adds to the beauty and value of the works described by Tasso, is that art has done all, yet nowhere is discoverable, or at least obtrusive:

"E quel che'l bello e'l caro accresce all' opre,
L'arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre."

Plutarch records admiringly this stroke in the triumph of Paulus Emilius, that the Macedonian arms seemed to be thrown together promiscuously, though really piled with the most careful art. Snell's caligraphy found a rapturous eulogist to laud it as "artful most, when not affecting art." The art of the "polite ancients," my Lord Shaftesbury explains, was to destroy every token or appearance of the artful,

* Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*.

to "give an extemporary air to what was writ, and make the effect of art be felt, without discovering the artifice." In a later chapter the noble author of the *Characteristics* affirms the "natural and simple manner which conceals and covers art," to be, not merely "of the genteelest, truest, and best-study'd taste," but the most truly artful.

Ben Jonson's description of the true artificer as one who will not run away from nature, as if afraid of her, or depart from life, and the likeness of truth, contains this addendum: "He knows it is his only art, so to carry it, as none but artificers perceive it." It is the inartistic only who, in Pope's phrase,

"With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornament their want of art."

Criticizing the History of Charles XII. of Sweden, by Voltaire, Mr. John Morley says, "the art of which is none the less because it is so little ostentatious and striking, and seems so easy." It has been remarked of the colouring of William Collins, R.A., that it betrays no evidence of the elaborate care, the intricate art that produced it, but strikes the eye at once as easy, inartificial, spontaneous; that it is eloquent in its very absence of any artifice of appeal, and direct in its influence over the humblest and most uncultivated admirer of Nature, because it does not perplex him with any visible display of the mysteries of Art. Such an artist so masters his art that, to quote Pope again,

"His easy Art may happy Nature seem."

An actor, Colley Cibber is made to say, is an artist who has gone deep enough in his art, to make dunces, critics, and greenhorns take it for nature. When the Vane of *Masks and Faces* contrasts Peg Woffington with her sisterhood of the stage—they were puppets, all attitude and trick; she all ease, grace, and nature,—"Nature!" sneers Pomander: "They have artifice—nature's libel. She has art, nature's counterfeit." And in another page, the same to the same and of the same: "What you take for simplicity, is her

refined art." * "I could not but think that something of too much art was apparent even in Mrs. Siddons," Leigh Hunt confessed, with all his admiration of her. This was in his Autobiography ; but in the little volume of dramatic criticisms he reprinted from the *Examiner*, after saying that she united with her noble conceptions of nature every advantage of art, every knowledge of stage effect and propriety, he gave her infinite credit for never displaying this knowledge with the "pompous minuteness of Mr. Kemble," her elder brother, but with that natural carelessness which showed it to be the result of genius rather than grave study. "If there is a gesture in the midst, or an attitude in the interval of action, it is the result of the impassioned moment ; one can hardly imagine there has been such a thing as a rehearsal for powers so natural and so spirited." Captain Gronow tells us of Mdlle. Mars, that in her acting there was never the slightest straining after effect,—or, rather, the effect was produced without any apparent effort : she spoke her part just as a lady might make a witty, or piquant, or pathetic remark in her drawing-room : every movement was intensely studied, but seemed perfectly natural. There were parts she played, which, from the manner of her playing them, might recall that stanza of Congreve's about fair Amoret :

"Coquet and coy at once her air,
Both studied, tho' both seem neglected ;
Careless she is with artful care,
Affecting to be unaffected."

But we must get away from the stage lamps, to find matter pertinent elsewhere.

* To another class, if not quite school, belongs Douglas Jerrold's Mrs. Wilkins. "The acting of Mrs. Wilkins is wonderfully natural. She has it born in her what other actresses have too often to labour for. She has such impulse ! The French actors have a better name for it—*abandon*. . . . Other actresses may obtain this from art ; now Mrs. Wilkins is abandoned by nature." It is her admiring husband who thus sounds his wife's praises, or what he means for such ; it being evidently Mr. Wilkins' boast that so abandoned a woman as his wife does not tread the boards.

Michelet observes of the great Flemish fêtes of the house of Burgundy that they had no affinity with our cold modern solemnities : "The art of concealing the preparations for the means of pleasure, so as to show the result only, was at this time unknown." Everything was shown, nature and art. David Hume had this fault to find in the French manners, that, like their clothes and furniture, they were too glaring. An English fine gentleman, he declared to distinguish himself from the rest of the world by the whole tenor of his conversation more than by any particular part of it ; so that, though you are sensible he excels, you are at a loss to tell in what, and have no remarkable civilities or compliments to pitch on as a proof of his politeness. "These he so smooths over that they pass for the common actions of life, and never put you to the trouble of returning thanks for them. The English politeness is always greatest when it appears least." This is treating the art of conversation as De Quincey treated it—more than once in print, and always in person—as one of the fine arts. Sheil said of some one who evidently led up to his own jests at the dinner-table, that he seemed as if he were chewing the poison before he spat it forth. Contrasting this with the unexpectedness of Sydney Smith's good things, a *Times* essayist remarks of the latter, that *his* gentler distillations, on the contrary, came upon you suddenly, like the splash of a cab-wheel, the centrifugal dispensations of a wet Newfoundland dog, or the passing bequest of any other reverend rook : you were involved in his jest unexpectedly, without notice that you were in its neighbourhood. "He so carefully concealed his art, and took tribute even from your surprise." If this order of speech be of the rarest, rarer still, perhaps, is that of the kind of speaker signalized in dramatic verse,—

"Whose artless speech, like crystal, shows the thing
'Twould hide, but only covers."

So with Einon robing Edith, in Scott's *Lord of the Isles* :
the mantle's fold

"In many an artful plait she tied,
To show the form it seem'd to hide."

A very plain dress, as Mr. Trollope says, may occasion as much study as the most elaborate,—witness such a wearer of one as his Lady Mason ; but then to her belonged the great art of hiding her artifice. Napoleon used to say of Josephine, that all the attractions of art were employed by her with such skill, that the art was never suspected. As though she had what Leigh Hunt calls

“ An art that applied them, sprung out of no art.”

An authority upon such matters lays down the law that no gentleman should ride too well : he should not, like certain painters, create difficulties for the sake of showing how dexterously he can overcome them ; nor should the art and strength whereby he guides his steed be palpable to sight : it should appear as if the simple will did all. Mr. Trollope tells us of Sir Lionel Bertram, whose appearance was perhaps the best thing about him, that, although a vain man, he was too clever to let his vanity show itself in an offensive manner : “ The *ars celare artem* was his forte ;” and he was able to live before the world as though he never cast a thought on his coat and pantaloons, nor ever did more than brush and smooth his iron-gray locks with due attention to cleanliness. Feminine art in such matters is glorified in poetry and prose. Herrick avows his susceptibility to a sweet disorder in the dress, a happy kind of carelessness :

“ A lawn about the shoulders thrown
 Into a fine distraction ;
 An erring lace, which here and there
 Enthral the crimson stomacher ;
 A cuff neglectful, and thereby
 Ribands that flow confusedly ;
 A winning wave, deserving note
 In the tempestuous petticoat ;
 A careless shoestring, in whose tie
 I see a wild civility ;
 Do more bewitch me, than when art
 Is too precise in every part.”

The Lucile of a living poet is painted with

“ airy pure forehead and throat ; gather'd loose
 Under which, by one violet knot, the profuse

Milk-white folds of a cool modest garment reposed,
Rippled faint by the breast they half hid, half disclosed.
And her simple attire thus in all things reveal'd
The fine art which so artfully all things conceal'd."

There is a something here to put us in mind of Prior's picture, where

"Again fair Alma sits confess'd
On Florimel's experter breast ;
Where she the rising sigh constrains,
And by concealing speaks her pains."

Charming Woman is the title of an essay in a leading Review, which glorifies her art of subtle flattery, especially in delicate assumption of self-abasement, despite of which "you cannot but feel that she is your superior, and that although she is too charming to acknowledge what would wound your pride, yet she feels it too, and tries to hide it ;" all which has the effect of making you admire her still more for the grace and tact she has displayed. We might wrest to our purpose in her regard a bit of Spenser about Britomart :

"However she her paynd with womanish art
To hide her wound, that none might it perceive :
Vaine is the art that seekes itselfe for to deceive."

A popular novelist describes a prominent character whose "whole manner was that of one who plays a part, yet is not sufficiently an actor to leave others unconscious of his acting." Social naturalness, says an essayist on social subjects, like perfect theatrical representation, is everywhere the result of the best art ; that is, of the most careful training ; it simulates self-forgetfulness by the very perfection of its self-control, while untrained nature is self-assertion at all corners, and is founded on the imperious consciousness of personality. Chesterfield somewhere speaks of company as a republic too jealous of its liberties to suffer a dictator, even for a quarter of an hour ; and yet in that, as in all republics, there are some few who really govern ; but then it is by seeming to disclaim, instead of

attempting to usurp, the power ; and their conquest is the more lasting for not being perceived.

Back to literary criticism again. Comparing Lysias with Isocrates, Dionysius pronounces the former to be superior in the same kind of way that a naturally handsome person is to one made so by art : the composition of Lysias pleases naturally ; that of Isocrates aims at pleasing. So again in his comparison of Lysias with Isæus. In reading Lysias, he says, one would not suppose that anything is uttered either artificially or without perfect sincerity, but everything appears natural and true ; thus forgetting that it is the height of art to imitate nature. In reading Isæus, one has just the contrary feeling ; nothing appears to be spoken naturally and without an effort. "Lysias seems to aim at truth, but Isæus to follow art : the one strives to please, the other to produce effect." Anaxagoras is made to say in Landor, that although a good historian will also be a good philosopher, he will take especial care that he be never caught in the attitude of disquisition or declamation. "The golden vein must run through his field, but we must not see rising out of it the shaft and the machinery." The monition is of wide appliance in miscellaneous literature.

Baxter's chief merit as an artist, according to Sir James Stephen, is, that he is perfectly artless ; and that he employs a style of great compass and flexibility, in such a manner as to demonstrate that he never thought about it, and as to prevent the reader, so long at least as he is reading, from thinking about it either. "Too clever by half," is the verdict of the *Saturday Review* on a brilliant literary statesman, whom it ventured to remind of the boy director of stage thunder and lighting commemorated in the old *Spectator*,—the one fault of that very promising performance being, that the lad failed to hide his head, and his candle. So it was, the critic in question alleged, with the rhetorician under reviewal : the lightning of tropes and distinctions and hard words is very fine lightning, but we somehow see the candle : the thing is too plainly artificial. It has been observed of Lord Brougham, that notwithstanding his para-

doxical exaggeration of the duty of an advocate to his client, he probably never addressed a court or jury without a collateral desire to display his own ability in winning his cause. "A more perfect forensic artist not only conceals, but actually forgets his art."

Sir Joseph Arnould, speaking of the happiness of diction, the *curiosa felicitas*, the pointed epigrams or "burning words," which sparkled in the graceful orations of Canning, or lit up like lightning flashes the stormy denunciations of Brougham, says of them that, however apparently spontaneous, they "were, as is now well known, the fruit in both cases of the extremest labour, the most unsparing effort, and the most consummate art." Again; after quoting some pages of Lord Denman's "Inaugural Discourse," the same author observes, that seldom have the strength, grace, and harmony of which English prose is susceptible in the hands of a master, been better illustrated than in the passage in question—each sentence in which was the product of careful study and diligent labour, while the general effect of the whole, as is the case with all true art, is an air of simplicity, nature, and freedom. Lord Lytton charged Lord Macaulay with insisting far too much on the artlessness of the age of Herodotus, and the un-studied simplicity of his style; for though History itself was young, Art was already at its zenith in the age of Sophocles, Pheidias, and Pericles. Do not all accounts of Herodotus, as a writer, assure us that he spent the greater part of a long life in composing, polishing, and perfecting his history; and is it not more in conformity with the characteristic spirit of the times, and the masterly effects which Herodotus produces, to conclude, that "what we suppose to be artlessness, was, in reality, the premeditated elaboration of art"? Thomson's apostrophe to ancient Greece contains this reference to Greek tragedy:

"and in the impassion'd man

Concealing art with art, the poet sunk."

Charles Nodier's dictum, that "tout effort est contraire au bien," is qualified by Sainte-Beuve with the explanation

that he has in view only the effort which betrays itself; "il oublie celui qui se dérobe." Mr. Ruskin lays it down that no great intellectual or artistic work was ever done by effort, that a great work can only be done by a great man, and that he does it without effort, not by "iron-bars and perspiration." It is obvious, remarks one of M. Taine's reviewers, (*Philosophie de l'Art*), that that French critic would so far concur with Mr. Ruskin as to grant that "power," not effort, is conspicuous in the work of the great artist; but he would maintain that the effort has been there, though cloaked under the natural power of the master. *Ars est celare artem*. The German playwright Müllner's art, observed Archdeacon Hare, was *ostentare artem*, through fear lest we might not discover it without; every vein and nerve and muscle being laid bare, as in an anatomy, and accompanied with a comment on its peculiar excellences. Perhaps his style might here and there go far to warrant the application to it of what Shakspeare's Timon tells the Athenian poet:

"Why, thy verse swells with stuff so fine and smooth,
That thou art even natural in thine art."

A good critic has said of Swift's *Drapier's Letters*, that, plain and simple as they seem to be at first view, a closer inspection finds them to be works of the most consummate skill and art. His friend Pope was following Horace when he wrote,

"Then polish all, with so much life and ease,
You think 'tis Nature, and a knack to please;
But ease in writing flows from Art, not chance;
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance."

Metaphysical Thomas Brown dilates, by the way, upon the feats of a rope-dancer or a tumbler as never failing to give greater pleasure to a child, and to the vulgar, who in their tastes are always childish, than the most graceful attitudes of the dancer in all his harmony of movement,—who does, perhaps, what no one else is capable of doing, but who seems to do it in a way which every one may try to imitate,

and who is truly most inimitable when he seems to show how very easy it is to execute all the wonders which he performs. Charles Kingsley resorted to the same illustration, in his lecture on English composition, when enforcing his friend Maurice's canon about "styles," that one should have no style at all : half-educated writers are always mannerists, he said ; while, the perfection of art is to conceal art, to depart from uncultivated and therefore defective nature, and rise again through art to a more organized and therefore more simple naturalness. Just as "it is only the perfect dancer who arrives at that height of art at which her movements seem dictated, not by conscious science, but unconscious nature."

The *naïveté* of Marivaux is objected to by Schlegel as prepared by him with too much art ; and the German critic likens it to children in the game of hide and seek, when they cannot stay quiet in their corner, but keep popping out their heads, if they are not immediately discovered. "In Marivaux we always see his aim from the very beginning, and all our attention is directed to discovering the way by which he is to lead us to it." Another good critic remarks of Shaftesbury, who appears to have bestowed unwearied pains upon his diction, that although he abounds in ingenious, forcible, and even brilliant passages, he failed to attain the crowning art of concealing his art, and his composition has in the main an air both of effort and affectation. Of Sterne, on the other hand, it has been said, that amid much apparent extravagance, his art of writing is singularly careful and perfect ; it will be found that every touch has been well considered, and performs its part in producing the effect ; but "the art of arts, the *ars celare artem*, never was possessed in a higher degree by any writer than by Sterne."

Of modern growth is that so-called "topographical school of biographers," which luxuriates in what seem superfluous details, as though a profusion of particulars would throw light on character, and that, given place and date and costume with sufficient accuracy, they shall not fail to tell

us a great deal about the man. Now, where this is done by the hand of a master of the art, we are often, as a shrewd reviewer concedes, very slow in discovering that the superstructure built on these groundworks is pure fancy, with no proper foundation of facts at all: the simple imitator, however, who regards the method from a business point of view as a notable aid to bookmaking, has not the same art to conceal art, and lets out the secret somewhat clumsily.

The late Mr. Nassau Senior took exception to the celebrated scene of Jeanie Deans' interview with Queen Caroline, that the Scottish lassie's pleading was much too rhetorical, and the Queen's comment, "This is eloquence," still worse. Had it *been* eloquence, it must necessarily, he argues, have been unperceived by the Queen,—supposing her to have been overpowered by Jeanie's entreaties. "If there be any art of which *celare artem* is the basis, it is this. The instant it* peeps out, it defeats its own object, by diverting our attention from the subject to the speaker, and that with a suspicion of his sophistry equal to our admiration of his ingenuity." In any case the rhetorician, the orator, as such, had need of all his art, to cover the exercise of it. Dr. Croly ascribes this distinctive peculiarity to the language of Grattan, that, while the happiest study of others is to conceal their art, his simplicity had the manner of art; so keen, concentrated, and polished was it, by nature. The orator is living, of one of whose speeches a brilliant writer gives this account: "Exquisitely poised as a Greek statue, every syllable was effective. The art was perfect—perfect because so artfully hidden. Each successive sentence was a step to the *dénouement*, but the path was studiously concealed." To all the Fine Arts the rule is of general application. True, the original leaders of the Pre-Raphaelite school were taxed with disregard or defiance of the rule. Of Mr. Millais it was even said that *his* reading of the

* Mr. Senior's *its* are almost singularly plural; but the reader will not mistake the identity.

canon seemed to be, "The perfection of art is to display art,"—so apparently eager was he to call attention to his tools. And a Saturday Reviewer of Mr. Holman Hunt's "Christ in the Temple," notwithstanding an expression of warm admiration for so truly great and noble a work, asserted the result to be the very opposite to that enforced by the golden rule ; so impossible is it for any one to look on that picture without thinking what a wonderful deal of pains the artist must have spent in working up a crowd of minutiae which none but himself would ever have thought of. Another authority in such matters, criticizing the landscape effects of David Cox, admits the canon in question to be true as a test, and as applied to results, but denies the soundness of it as a precept. It is only sound, he maintains, so far as it implies that there should be no ostentation, *no tour de force*.

§ VII.

AN INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY AND A PLIGHTED HEAD.

Hamlet, Act ii., Sc. 2.

"HATH there been such a time, (I'd fain know that,)
 That I have positively said, 'Tis so,
 When it proved otherwise?"

Polonius utters the challenge in tones triumphantly defiant. He challenges all comers, King, Queen, principalities and powers, to point out a single flaw in his judgment, one sole instance of fallibility in his decisions, one solitary case of error in his authoritative rulings.

Positive people of all kinds, and of either sex, are not wanting in Shakspeare, some of them with good and some with bad reason, or none at all, for their positiveness. There is the holy friar in *Much Ado about Nothing*; "Call me a fool," he bids the company,

"Trust not my reading, nor my observations,
 . . . Trust not my age,
 My reverence, calling, nor divinity,"

if Hero be not belied. There is Leontes in the *Winter's Tale* :

"No, no ; if I mistake
 In those foundations which I build upon,
 The centre is not big enough to bear
 A schoolboy's top ;"

while Antigonus, on the other hand, is equally positive of Hermione's innocence. "For every inch of woman in the world, Ay, every dram of woman's flesh, is false, if she be." Ranting, swaggering Pistol's style is,

"I speak the truth :
 When Pistol lies, do this ; and fig me, like
 The bragging Spaniard,"—

which expression the commentators explain to mean, Make figs at me, by putting the thumb between the fore and middle fingers ; an insulting gesture which surely no bragging Spaniard better deserved than this Eastcheap swashbuckler.

The half-remonstrant, wholly complacent query of Polonius finds a faint sort of French echo in the demand of Molière's Frosine : "Faut il le demander ? et me voit-on mêler de rien dont je ne vienne à bout ?" Beaumont and Fletcher's Justice in *The Coxcomb* plumes himself on the possession of "as round a wisdom" as the wisest of all, thanks to "this thirty years" of official experience, as well as to his inborn wit : "I never fail'd in these things yet," is his style, when delivering himself of an opinion. That's poz, "ou mon crédit n'est plus qu'une ombre vaine," as the statescraftsman in Racine words it. Swift had a relish for tidbits of this flavour. As he enjoyed setting down in the *Journal to Stella* how the old Bishop of Worcester [Lloyd] went to Queen Anne by appointment, to prove to her "out of Daniel and the Revelation" his prophetic programme for the time, or rather just about to be, and "declared that he would be content to give up his bishopric if it were not true,"*—so again the malicious Dean

* "Lord Treasurer confounded him sadly in his own learning, which made the old fool very quarrelsome. He is near ninety years old."—Swift, *Journal to Stella*, July 1, 1712.

found a dear delight in plaguing Partridge the almanac-maker, by setting up an imaginary Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., to say, after the selfsame sort, "And I will be content that Partridge, and the rest of his clan, may hoot me for a cheat and impostor if I fail in any single particular of moment." Readers of Lord Chatham's speeches may remember his addiction to such emphasis of assertion as "I pledge myself for it," "I stake my reputation on it," "I will consent to be taken for an idiot if" it be not so, etc. But Pitt was no Polonius, at any period of his career (*nisi prius*, p. 320).

Scott's Doctor Rochecliffe brags of his reputation as a plotter; and is not a bit disconcerted by the home-thrust query, But were not all those plots of his unsuccessful, and several of the main agents of them hanged? "Yes, my young friend," answered the doctor gravely, "as many others have been with whom I have acted; but only because they did not follow my advice implicitly. You never heard that I was hanged myself." What is very extraordinary, Sir Peter Teazle remarks, touching the disputes between Lady Teazle and himself, "she is always in the wrong." "I was never mistaken in my life," he affirms, when passing judgment on the respective characters of Charles and Joseph Surface.

Pointing to his own head and neck, "Take this from this if this be otherwise," said Polonius, confidently staking his absolutely unerring and therefore absolutely safe old pate, on the accuracy of his averment.* Queen Elizabeth's trusty agent, Randolph, again and again protests to Cecil his conviction of Mary Stuart's malice, in terms like these: "In the whole world if there be a more malicious heart towards the Queen my sovereign than hers that here now reigneth, let me

* "Your Majesty may take my life, if you find him other than I have told you," said Simon Renard to Queen Mary, on the subject of Philip of Spain.

To her sister and successor, Elizabeth, Scott makes Tressilian say, "I will lay down my life on the block," if wrong about Amy Robsart; and the Queen tells him he talks like a fool, for his pains,—no head falling in England, she asserts, but by just sentence of English law.

be hanged at my home-coming, or counted a villain for ever."* And again, two months later, to another correspondent: "If there be living a more mortal enemy to the Queen my mistress than this woman is, I desire never to be reputed but the vilest villain alive."† The style was common in those days, and Shakspeare makes free use of it. If Benedick break his word of perpetual bachelorship, any one that lists is welcome to pick out his eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang him up for the sign of blind Cupid,—or, he goes on, "hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me." If Helena fail in her alleged ability to cure the sick king, "With vilest torture let my life be ended," is her bidding; "Unpitied let me die." If Christopher Sly be mistaken in his identity, "score me up," quoth he, in appropriate language of the alehouse, "for the lyingest knave in Christendom." If Poins be proved out in his reckoning about stripping Falstaff and his fellows of their booty, "cut this head from my shoulders," is his invitation to the prince. And for another example of emphasis in the positive we may cite Bardolph—not the tapster, but the baron—who tells Northumberland,

"My lord, I'll tell you what :—
If my young lord your son have not the day,
Upon mine honour, for a silken point [lace]
I'll give my barony."

Ben Jonson's Truewit has a trick of saying that if this or that be not, or turn not out, exactly as by him alleged, "take the mortgage of my wit,"—or again, in that case, "let me be thought a Jack Daw or La Foole or anything worse," if indeed anything can be worse, or at least be thought so; and there is nothing, good or bad, but thinking makes it so. "Sell me for a fool," if this or that be not as I allege it to be, "and, I believe, those who buy me will have a bad bargain," exclaims a sapient oracle of Fielding's drawing. Prince Camaralzaman is ready and willing to be called "the most impudent astrologer that ever was, is, or will be," if his

* Randolph to Cecil, Sept. 4, 1565.

† Randolph to Leicester, Nov. 8, 1565.—Froude, vii., 193, 223.

charm do not work. Almost in the style of Ergasilus in the *Captivi* of Plautus :

“Nam hercle nisi mantiscinatus probe ero, fusti pectito.”

From the days of the patriarchs downwards we have specimens extant, different as much in spirit as in form, of the sort of language that incurs responsibility and invites retributive penalties. If Judah fail of his word to Jacob, “Then, let me bear the blame for ever,” says he, of the contingent loss of Benjamin. If the disguised Odysseus forfeit his word to Penelope,

“Hurl me from yon dread precipice on high ;
The due reward of fraud and perjury.”

The like is Euryclea’s style to her mistress, some ten books later :

“and if a lie
Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die.”

So the Davus of Terence in the *Andria* : “Si quicquam invenies me mentitum, occidito.” And Geta in the *Adelphi*, “Immo hercle extorque, nisi ita factum’st, Demea.” In Beaumont and Fletcher’s *A King and No King*, Gobrias tells Arbaces,

“And if my speech deserve not faith, lay death
Upon me, and my latest words shall force
A credit from you.”

Marrall assures and reassures Wellborn, in Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*,

“If I play not my prize
To your full content, and your uncle’s much vexation,
Hang up Jack Marrall.”

If Balurdo, in Marston’s *Antonio and Mellida*, be out in his reckoning, he bids them “say, Balurdo, thou art a sot, an ass,”—a penalty presumably as severe as hanging itself. King James I., in the Landorian colloquy with Isaac Casaubon, challenges his interlocutor to disprove his averments,—which done, “you shall have my crown for your pains, Master Isaac, and the head that is under it to boot.” “I will let you cut off my head,” said Cevallos to Ferdinand VII. in 1808, “if, in a quarter of an hour after the arrival of

your Majesty at Bayonne, he [Napoleon] does not recognize you as the King of Spain and of the Indies." At the same crisis, but on the opposite side, we find the Duke of Mahon offering to "pledge his head" for the king's safe escape into Arragon. The grandees of Spain, or some of them, at this time, were ready to pledge their heads for a trifle. Pledge a head, or eat it;* be lavish of one's words, or eat them; it is pretty much the same, with some big-talkers and feather-heads.

§ VIII.

POLONIUS ACCOUNTED A GOOD ACTOR.

Hamlet, Act iii., Sc. 2.

As Shakspeare doubtless had seen many a Bottom in the old Warwickshire hamlets, many a Sir Nathaniel playing "Alissander," and finding himself "a little o'erparted," so afterwards, when he came to London, and found his way into great society, he failed not, Mr. Froude surmises, "to see Polonius burlesquing Cæsar on the stage, as in his proper person he burlesqued Sir William Cecil." Said Hamlet to Polonius,

"My lord, you played once in the university, you say?

Pol. That did I, my lord; and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar; I was killed i' the Capitol: Brutus killed me."

Ben Jonson's Volpone has his histrionic reminiscences, and

* "I'll eat my head," is the contingent promise, ever and anon renewed, of Mr. Grimwig, should his infallibility be found at fault. To Mr. Brownlow's hearty championship of the boy Oliver, "I'll answer for his truth with my life!" the other old gentleman promptly responds, "And I for his falsehood with my head!" "If ever that boy returns [as pledged] to this house, sir, I'll eat my head!" "If there's a hinsect in the ouse I'll heat im!" pledges himself Mr. Charles Reade's detective in *Hard Cash*.

can still boast himself as fresh, as hot, as high, and in as jovial plight,

“As when, in that so celebrated scene,
At recitation of our comedy,
For entertainment of the great Valois,
I acted young Antinous ; and attracted
The eyes and ears of all the ladies present,
To admire each graceful gesture, note, and footing.”

Has honest Druggier, in the *Alchemist*, no credit with the players? Face asks him ; and Abel's reply is, “Yes, sir : did you never see me play the Fool?” Adam Woodcock, in the *Abbot*, has his own professional share of self-conceit in the same line : “I think I was as good an Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason.” King John III. of Portugal piqued himself on the skill with which he played parts in Gil Vicente's dramas.

Salvator Rosa is said to have been a comic actor of infinite vivacity, and even to have thrown Rome into “convulsions of gaiety” by one or two of his impersonations.

In a MS. book, called Symond's *Historical Notes*, said by Mr. Langton Sandford to contain many worthless anecdotes, it is told that in the play called *Lingua*, first performed at Trinity College, Cambridge, and afterwards at the Huntingdon Free School, Oliver Cromwell “acted the part of Tactus, and stumbled at a crown, and took it up, and put it on, and 'twas fit, and asked if it did not become him.” The stage direction is, TACTUS *stumbleth at the robe and crown* ; and the accompanying words are, “High thoughts have slippery feet ; I had well-nigh fallen. . . .

“Methinks I hear my noble parasites
Styling me Cæsar, or great Alexander.”

It is curious to think of George Whitefield, as a youngster, acting (often in girl's clothes) plays composed by the master of the Gloucester grammar-school for the gratification of the magistrates.*

* Not so curious is it to think of Pepys tenderly recalling the part which, as a boy, he was to have acted at Sir Robert Cooke's,—that,

Voltaire's *Rome sauvée*, of which the subject is the conspiracy of Catiline, and the hero the most eloquent of consuls or men, contains in that hero a part which the author was very fond of filling in private representation, and, we are

namely, of Arethusa : " And it was very pleasant to me [to see the play, *Philaster*, in 1668], but more to think what a ridiculous thing it would have been for me to have acted a beautiful woman."—This footnote might be made to cover many pages, were it allowed to take in miscellaneous reminiscences, by noteworthy men, of the parts they actually (and not like Mr. Pepys were merely meant to have) played in their college or school days. We should have Jodelle playing Cleopatra before Henri II. at Paris ; and D'Urfé playing Apollo in the college of Turnon, " in a wide taffety robe of crimson and orange, his head surrounded by sunbeams." We should have Milton and other university lads in full force, in the merry days when they were young. We should have William Pitt at Burton Pynsent, acting in his own tragedy of *Laurentius, King of Clarinium*. We should have the first Lord Lansdowne, and Lord Sheffield, playing together in *Julius Cæsar*, to say nothing of the Colmans and O'Keefes and such-like, zealously getting up private theatricals at school, and taking their full share in them, or something over. So with Volkov, the reputed founder of the Russian theatre, whose early passion for such performances was extreme ; nor was the Russian poet Zhukovsky far behind him in this respect,—making a name as he did by his acting of the hero in his own *Camillus, or Rome Preserved*, with a troop of girls for the other parts. Napoleon at the military school at Brienne was pleased to strut his hour upon the stage. Victor Hugo was not so mature nor so interested an actor when, upon one occasion, finding the drama (like Christopher Sly) a trifle tedious, he dug something sharp into the leg of Mademoiselle Rose, who was playing the chief part, and from whom he wrung the agonized *aside*, or stage-whisper, " Veux-tu bien finir, petit vilain ? " Another stage absurdity might be offered in Washington Irving's personation of Juba, in *Cato*,—in one scene hurried on while his little mouth was full to repletion of "honey-cake," which adhesive substance he in vain essayed to swallow, and was finally forced to rake out with his finger the glutinous mass, ere he could articulate his speech, which, after all, must have been much less amusing to the audience than the preliminary by-play.

And what a deal might be said about the Westminster plays, from long before the days when Monk Lewis was manager, director, and treasurer, and acted Faulconbridge to Charles Wynne's Pandulph, down to our own time ;—while almost every public school, and most private ones, would now claim mention for its list of stars.

At Harrow, the future Sir William Jones acted with *kudos*, or *éclat*, or

assured, with distinguished succès.* With no such histrionic talent was Rousseau endowed. At M. de Bellegarde's château, near to Saint-Denis, in the diversions of which he was forced by Mdme. d'Epinay to take part, despite of his avowed *bêtise* and *gaucherie*, he was entrusted with a theatrical rôle which he studied for six months incessantly, and his ultimate representation of which was hissed from beginning to end. After that experiment, no fresh part was ever assigned or proposed to him. Alfieri performed in his own *Antigone* at Rome,

whatever may be the best plain English for both those cant expressions, the part of Prospero in the *Tempest*; and almost before the precocious lad was in his teens he seems to have composed a tragedy on the story of Meleager, in which he played the hero with a will. Lista, the Spanish poet, critic, and mathematician, won great applause as a juvenile actor of some of the chief parts in Lope and Calderon. Jan Frans Willems, the originator of the so-called "Flemish movement" for the revived culture of the Dutch language in Belgium, expatiates on his early achievements upon the stage, in mystery parts of the middle ages. But too many school performances are apt to be at the best on a low level with that of *King John* at Dr. Valpy's, as witnessed (and described) by Miss Mitford,—the performers a rabble of boys of all ages and sizes, some thick and some stunted like pincushions; others pointed and angular and sharp-limbed, as it were, like scissors; "the Dauphin, a little round fellow, not taller than a thimble; and King Philip, a shot-up limber lad, tall, and bent in the middle, like a broken thread paper. Oh, that *King John*! I shan't recover it for two years." And yet the good-natured lady was only too favourably predisposed, if but for Dr. Valpy's own sake, and Talfourd's, and her own associations with Reading, towards the grammar-school aspirants. A fellow-feeling would help to make her wondrous kind, for she had been a devotee to school-plays as a miss in her teens; and at Chelsea too, the scene of Mistress Ashwell's early triumphs, as fondly put on record by Samuel Pepys: "Ashwell all along telling us some parts of their maske at Chelsea school, which was very pretty, and I find she hath a most prodigious memory, remembering so much of things acted six or seven years ago." Did he tell her, in return, of his own *Arethusa*,—one of the might-have-beens of much more than thrice six or seven years ago?

* "I, who speak to you, I played Cicero," wrote Voltaire to D'Argental. Yes, remarks Mr. Carlyle; and was manager and general stage-king and contriver; being expert at this, if at anything. "Excellent in acting say the witnesses; superlative, for certain, as Preceptor of the art,—though impatient now and then."—*History of Friedrich II.*, Book xvi., ch. vi.

with the beautiful and majestic Duchess of Zagarolo; and at Florence he acted successively and successfully the parts of Filippo, Carlo, and Saul, in his own plays. Lord Bute once played Lothario, in the *Fair Penitent*, at the Duchess of Queensberry's.

Hogarth had for uncle a Troutbeck poet, the "tragœdiscalos of the Fell-side" the author of *Biographia Borealis* calls him; and, testifies Philosopher Walker, "I myself have had the honour to bear a part in one of his plays."

The History of the Royal Artillery makes specific mention of the Garrison Dramatic Club which enlivened New York in 1777, and in particular of Brigade-Major Williams, whose rendering of Macbeth and Richard III. is frequently and favourably mentioned in the Library of the Historical Society in that city,—to say nothing of other amateurs hardly inferior in the "great propriety, spirit, and accuracy" with which they played their parts. Chateaubriand tells how "we went from one neighbour's house to another, acting comedies, in which I sometimes played an indifferent part." M. Guizot had more the making of a good actor in him, if we may accept the opinion of Madame de Staël, in one generation, and of Mdlle. Rachel in another. "I am sure you would act well in tragedy," the former lady told him, the first time he visited her at Ouchy; "stay with us, and take a part in *Andromaque*." And after one day hearing him in his *pleine gloire de tribune*, at a sitting of *la Chambre*, the great French tragedienne exclaimed, "I should love dearly to play tragedy with that man"—*avec cet homme-là*.

Mrs. Augustus Hare leaves this record of at least one distinguished name: "Reginald Heber and Mr. Stow are both excellent actors, and we acted a French *proverbe* one night, and the 'Children in the Wood' another, . . . and very amusing it was." The good bishop was not above complacently recalling his histrionic experiences, any more than the worthy Vicar of Wakefield: "As I once had some theatrical powers myself, I descanted on such topics with my usual freedom," Dr. Primrose tells us. There was a touch

of Polonius, as well as a touch of nature, here ; not less than in the confession or profession of Crabbe's confessor or professor :

“ I would not boast,—but I could act a scene
In any play, before I was fifteen.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Hamlet.

§ I.

THE PLAY OF HAMLET.

IN *Hamlet*, more clearly and readily than in any other of his plays, M. de Barante could perceive how Shakspeare possessed the marvellous art of casting a spell over the vulgar, and, at the same time, of fascinating enlightened and meditative spirits—in this respect resembling the spectacle of Nature, who so offers herself to all that each may prize her charms according to his point of view and appreciative power. And since man is docile in more directions than one; since the cultivation of his mental force and the exercise of his reflective powers are not cherished at the cost of that portion of himself which delights in the impressions of sense and imagination; since there ever remains in him something *d'enfant et de populaire*, the learned and the lettered have something to regret in any dramatic representation which appeals to themselves alone, as such; so that, indeed, it might be maintained, up to a certain point, that a genuine theatrical success requires universal suffrage. Now the conception of *Hamlet* was singularly favourable to the extended range, the variety, the universality, which characterize Shakspeare: it is a philosophical tragedy, rife with all kinds of reflections, and indicative of the view he took of the world and of human nature; just such a work as may best enable us to make acquaintance with himself. Barante also hails in it a *précieux témoignage* of the Elizabethan age, which inevitably moulded and coloured it throughout: we may here learn not a little as to the tendency and drifts of thinking minds—the master

minds of that epoch,—as to the character of their activity, and the effect wrought on them by study and knowledge. If “la philosophie est la science des résumés généraux,” a philosophic work must be, more than any other, a symbol and revelation of the time that gave it birth. And the interest is greatly heightened when the epoch in question is one in which the human mind, long delayed and repressed by the bonds of an imperfect civilization, begins to soar aloft, and to take free flight, full of movement, of curiosity, and of ardour. In *Hamlet*, accordingly, are to be found all the marks and effects of that kind of surprise and excitement inspired by learning and philosophy in those who were the first in time to surrender themselves thereto with all the charm of novelty: the wealth of newly acquired knowledge, the accumulating fund of reasoning, the lavish expenditure of reflections, could not but form the character of those ages, “born again” in the renaissance of literature and free thought. Hamlet himself, above all, is imagined in consonance with the ideas of those times of ferment. He has been long-time a student at Wittenberg, “dans ces universités allemandes où déjà l’on creusait métaphysiquement pour découvrir les principes des choses,” where already the student lived in an ideal world, and reverie reduced man to the inner circle of his inward life.

“Genius, the Pythian of the beautiful,
Leaves its dark truths a riddle to the dull—
From eyes profane a veil the Isis screens,
And fools on fools still ask, What *Hamlet* means?”

Charles Kingsley called it the beau-ideal of the poetry of doubt; and asked what would a tragedy be in which all the actors were Hamlets, or rather scraps of Hamlets? A drama of *Hamlet* he declared to be only possible because the one sceptic is surrounded by characters who have some positive faith, who do their work for good or evil undoubtingly while he is speculating about his,—Ophelia, and Laertes, Fortinbras, Claudius, and the very grave-digger, knowing well enough what they want, whether Hamlet does or not.* In the Prince

* “The whole play is, in fact, Shakspeare’s subtle *reductio ad absurdum* of that very diseased type of mind which has been for the last forty years

of Denmark one of his best critics describes—taking situation as well as character into account—a concentration of all the interests that belong to humanity: there is scarcely a trait of frailty or of grandeur, which may have endeared to us our most beloved friends in real life, that is not to be found in Hamlet, whom “undoubtedly Shakspeare loved beyond all his other creations.” If the question be put, Who ever knew a Hamlet in real life? the best answer perhaps is another question, Yet who, ideal as the character is, feels not its reality? “Here is a being with springs of thought, and feeling, and action, deeper than we can search. These springs rise from an unknown depth, and in that depth there seems to be a oneness of being which we cannot distinctly behold, but which we believe to be there; and thus irreconcilable circumstances, floating on the surface of his actions, have not the effect of making us doubt the truth of the general picture.” So much of what is wayward and unaccountable found Jeffrey in this play, that he advised Shakspeare students to begin rather with *Othello*, which, with less exuberance and variety, is full of deep feeling, force, and dignity, and is all perfectly consistent, smooth, and intelligible; none the less the Old Judge pronounced *Hamlet* to be, beyond a doubt, unique as regards the prodigality of high fancy, together with infinite discrimination of character, and moral wisdom and pathos. In this thoroughly “subjective” tragedy, Gustave Planche recognized a most ample exercise of *la clairvoyance* and reflection, but he declined to believe that Shakspeare had put into it anything like half the ideas imputed to him by Goethe and Tieck. The late Professor George Moir ascribed the secret charm which irresistibly attracts the readers of *Hamlet*, to its baffling mystery, its inscrutable character. Could we, he argued, fathom the principles of the Prince’s character—“le personnage bizarre d’Hamlet,” as Villemain words it,—could we reduce to any logical scheme or plan the strange anomalies it presents, it

[written in 1853] identified with ‘genius.’”—*Miscellanies*, by Charles Kingsley, vol. i., p. 287.

might still remain, as it is now, an object of admiration, but not of that awful curiosity, mingled with love, which it at present excites. This critic takes our imagination to be stirred by it as by the contemplation of a mystic and enigmatical character in real life, which we know to be a reality, whose actions we feel must have their sufficient causes, but whose secret springs of action, "the fountain from the which his current runs," lie too deep for discovery. He likens the play to some enchanted region looming before us in wild magnificence; as we approach, we feel the solid earth beneath us, yet we know that we are treading haunted ground; on all sides the prospect fades away into the undefined and illimitable; and even those objects which had at first seemed clear, waver and grow dim, or change their shapes, even while we gaze upon them.* Mr. Lewes, again, insists that *Hamlet*, in spite of a prejudice current in certain circles that if now produced for the first time it would fail, is the most popular play in our language,—“amusing” thousands annually, while it stimulates the minds of millions: the lowest and most ignorant audiences delight in it.† He regards the source of this delight as twofold: first, the sublimity of the play, and its reach of thought on topics the most profound; for the dullest soul can feel a grandeur which it cannot understand, and will listen with hushed awe to the outpourings of a great meditative mind obstinately questioning fate: secondly, its wondrous dramatic variety. Remarking upon the absorbing fascination of profound thoughts in it, he is for calling

* “In vain we endeavour to find some position from which a clear view of the whole domain may be obtained. The mist is only dispelled from one quarter to settle down upon another; and to every new wanderer in this realm of shadows, do the shapes which inhabit it, and the scenes which it presents, show themselves in some new form of sublimity and beauty.”—*Shakspeare in Germany*, Part I.

† The remark is made more than once by Macready, in his *Reminiscences*, that no actor possessed of moderate advantages of person, occasional animation, and some knowledge of stage business, can entirely fail in the part of Hamlet; the interest of the story, and the rapid succession of startling situations growing out of it compel the attention of the spectator, and irresistibly engage his sympathy.

Hamlet "the tragedy of thought," for there is as much reflection as action in it; but the reflection itself is made dramatic, and hurries the breathless audience along with an interest which knows no pause. It is a machinery of horrors, physical and mental, by which moves "the highest, the grandest, and the most philosophic of tragedies."

M. Philarète Chasles is a fair and favourable example of the latter-day Frenchman who can "enter into" Shakspeare's ideas, without passing through Voltaire's strait gate. He explains that the poet's object is to depict the *mortelle incertitude* of the young prince, his long and bitter meditation upon life and sin, upon the destination of man, upon virtue and vice. To perturb this contemplative soul, already predisposed to melancholy, the ghost of a murdered father has stalked before his strained gaze. From that moment, Hamlet no longer lives on this earth of ours. Initiated into the secrets of another world, he feels himself ill at ease among the living. The desire to avenge his father, the terror inspired within him by that unknown world whose sublime attractions are nevertheless for him so potent, keep him still upon earth, and he remains as it were suspended over a gulf, between two worlds. Such, to M. Chasles, appears the Prince of Denmark during the course of the play. He dreamily muses, he cherishes a habit of reverie, he lives with spectres; his soul is with his murdered father. When the anile formalism of Polonius, and the hypocritical kindness of the king, and Gertrude's remorseful visitations, combine to awaken Hamlet and to recall to his remembrance the forgotten realities which surround him, we then see how his contempt and his irony come out, still bearing the imprint of the dreamy ideas by which he is haunted. There is in his talk a something of insult, of sadness, of derangement, and of whimsical folly, intermingled all. His recent communication with the world of spirits has infected his mind with the germs of madness. He becomes cruel to Ophelia whom he loves. He finds a sombre charm in conversing with grave-diggers. To the end, he is animated by a gloomy excitement, a secret horror, a meditative and

merciless spirit of mockery. What though Samuel Johnson, that "excellent lexicographe," that clever investigator of words, that practised penman of cadenced periods with their perpetual equality of two members and correlation of two parts,—what though the English doctor avowed that he could understand nothing of Hamlet and his situation,—the French professor asserts that nothing can be more natural, nothing less unaccountable or *bizarre*. We have here, says M. Chasles, no old-world Orestes, obedient to the divine fatality which plunges the avenging sword of her son in a mother's heart. To understand Hamlet, all that is wanted is to identify one's self with that young prince, and to think on the disorganization which would befall us, were the shade of a being we have loved and lost to startle our clear eyesight all at once,—an apparition with credentials from the unseen world, eloquent in utterance, majestic in mien, and now menacing, now plaintive in the tone of his address.

One can scarcely make a study of such *études* as these *sur W. Shakspeare*, by so intelligent a lecturer on comparative literature, and so popular a professor *au Collège de France*, without contrasting the strain with that of Voltaire and his school. In Crabb Robinson's Diary may be read the diarist's impression fresh from reading Voltaire's "critique of Hamlet,"—which critique is there pronounced to be a very instructive as well as entertaining performance, showing as it does how a work of unequalled genius and excellence may be made fun of, and "laughably exposed." The congenial friend of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb, forgave Frenchmen for their disesteem of Shakspeare. And he went on to say: "Voltaire has taken no unfair liberties with our idol. He has brought together all the *disconvenances*, according to the laws of the French drama, as well as the national peculiarities. To a Frenchman, *Hamlet* must appear absurd and ridiculous to an extreme." And this, H. C. R. was fain to own, by fair means,—the Frenchman not perceiving how much the absurdity, in fact, lay in his own narrow views and feelings.

§ II.

THE CHARACTER OF HAMLET.

UPON the character of Hamlet depends the interest of the play of *Hamlet*. Take the word "character" in whatever sense one will,—the psychological or the technically dramatic,—it is one that cannot be left out of the play.*

To Goethe it was clear that Shakspeare intended to exhibit the effect of the sense of a great duty imposed upon a soul unable to perform it: an oak-tree is planted in a china vase, proper only to receive the most delicate flowers; the roots strike out, and the vase flies to pieces. "A pure,

* Various and often laboured and unlikely enough are the explanations offered of "the part of Hamlet omitted, by desire." One of the most plausible is, that the jest or story originated in a country-town excision of the Hamlet and Ophelia scene, with a view to justify the patronage and presence of families and "seminaries"—the present proverbial usage of the story dropping all mention of Ophelia, whose part may have been equivocally cited in the playbill in question.

Edmund Kean in his young days met with a Guernsey critic, who thus appraised the dramatic aspirant, and utilized the even then antiquated joke: "Last night a young man, whose name the bills said to be Kean, made his first appearance in Hamlet, and truly his performance of that character made us wish that we had been indulged with the country system of excluding it, and playing all the other characters." *Blackwood's Magazine*, by the way, many years later, deliberately expressed its approval of the Guernsey estimate, as "a most sensible piece of criticism;" nor, by the time that Barry Cornwall published his *Life of the popular tragedian*, had Maga come round to think better of him.

The jest, whatever its origin, and whatever its merits, has long been, and continues to be, a well-worked one in the illustrative aids and appliances of miscellaneous literature. Now we have a Saturday Reviewer observing (before Disestablishment) of the Irish Protestant clergy, otherwise virtuous and exemplary, that they taught a religion which the people around them would not receive: "It is the play of *Hamlet* with the part of Hamlet left out, and all the minor characters very meritoriously performed." Now it is another journalist remarking that "a service without a sermon—good, bad, or indifferent—would appear to most Englishmen like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark." Now it is the author of *Social Life in Munich* going to hear Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto* for the sake of one air in it—the one tenor air which some good authorities

noble, highly moral disposition, but without that energy of soul which constitutes the hero, sinks under a load which it can neither support nor resolve to abandon. All his obligations are sacred to him, but this alone is above his powers. An impossibility is required at his hands—not an impossibility in itself, but that which is so to him.” And Wilhelm Meister points out accordingly how the Prince of Denmark turns, shifts, advances, and recedes; how he is constantly reminding himself of his great commission, which he nevertheless in the end seems almost entirely to lose sight of, and this without recovering his former tranquillity.* “La préponderance de la pensée et de la parole sur l'action, et, pour

reckon the finest in the world—and doomed to find the opera mercilessly mangled, and the one air of all airs left out: “After this, who would say that the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet left out, is a phrase that has been too often repeated?”

Mr. Nassau Senior, in the capacity of Quarterly Reviewer of *St. Ronan's Well*, predicted that if it should ever be dramatized, the part of the hero would probably be omitted. And no loss either, he implied. Miss Brand withdrew, after one performance, her tragedy of the *Siege of Belgrade*, for the purpose of cutting out the hero; “and the tragedy was not the worse for his departure,” Mr. Boaden assures us. Colman, again, has a story of Manager Mossop announcing a performance of the *Maid of the Mill*, for the sake of the music, and specializing (as an attraction) “the part of Lord Aimworth (*without the songs*) by Mr. Mossop.”

The Hungarian Kazinczy's translation of *Hamlet* had this demerit, that it was taken, not from Shakspeare, but from Schröder, which is “Hamlet with the poetry omitted.” Mrs. Browning's eloquent reviewal of the Greek Christian poets has this to say of John Tzetza, of the twelfth century,—that his great poem, in thirteen chiliads, comprises mention of everything under the sun; and yet there is one thing lacking. “The omission is simply Poetry! there is no apparent consciousness of her entity in the mind of this versifier; no aspiration towards her presence, not so much as a sigh upon her absence.” Tronchon's extraordinary epitaph on Racine, while recording his virtues, acknowledges that there was one stain upon his memory—he had been a dramatic poet. Bishop Warburton inferred from the fact that Mallet, in writing the Life of Bacon, forgot his being a philosopher, that in his forthcoming Life of Marlborough he would no doubt forget that the duke was a general.

* Besides the often-quoted passage of criticism in chapter xiii. of the Fourth Book of *Wilhelm Meister*, other noteworthy comments on Hamlet occur in chap. iii. of that book, and in the sixth chapter of Book v.

tout dire d'un mot, la faiblesse, voilà le fond du caractère d'Hamlet, tel que Shakspeare l'a conçu." So wrote, and lectured, M. Saint-Marc Girardin. But, surely, urges Hartley Coleridge against too unquestioning an acceptance of Goethe's view, perhaps too indiscriminately followed by foreign critics,—surely, feebleness of mind, the fragility of a china vase, lack of power and energy, are not the characteristics of Hamlet. So far from it, he is represented as fearless, almost above the strength of humanity : he does not "set his life at a pin's fee" : he converses, unshaken, with what the stoutest warriors have trembled to think upon, jests with a visitant from darkness, and gathers unwonted vigour from the pangs of death. Nor in all his musings, all the many-coloured mazes of his thought, can this critic descry anything of female softness—anything of amiable weakness : his anguish is stern and masculine, stubbornly self-possessed, above the kind relief of sighs, and tears, and soothing pity. "The very style of his more serious discourse is more austere, philosophic,—I had almost said prosaic,—than that of any other character in Shakspeare." Accordingly, Hartley Coleridge takes it to be not the weight and magnitude, the danger and difficulty of the deed imposed as a duty, that weighs upon his soul, and enervates the sinews of his moral being, but the preternatural contradiction involved in the duty itself, the irregular means through which the duty is promulgated and known.

There is a personage in one of the late Lord Lytton's least-read fictions, who may partly serve to illustrate this phase of character crossed by circumstance : a philosopher, whose attachment to abstruse studies was one of the main causes which unfitted him for a life of action. But other and exceptional circumstances "had perverted his keen and graceful intellect to morbid indulgence in mystic reveries, and all the doubt, fear, and irresolution of a man who pushes metaphysics into the supernatural world." Whenever he had sought to wrestle against hostile circumstances, some seemingly accidental cause had blasted the labours of his most vigorous energy, till by degrees a gloomy cloud of

despondency, almost of despair, settled over his mind. "He was a kind of Hamlet ; formed under prosperous and serene fortunes to render blessings and reap renown ; but over whom the chilling shadow of another world had fallen—whose soul curdled back into itself—whose life had been separated from that of the herd—whom doubts and awe drew back, while circumstances impelled onward—whom a supernatural doom invested with a peculiar philosophy, not of human effect and cause—and who, with every gift that could ennoble and adorn, was suddenly palsied into that mortal imbecility which is almost ever the result of mortal visitings into the haunted regions of the Ghostly and Unknown." Mrs. Jameson, with her wonted fineness of critical insight, depicts Hamlet as bewildered by the horrors of his situation—horrors which his subtle intellect, his strong imagination, and his tendency to melancholy, at once exaggerate, and take from him the power either to endure, or, "by opposing, end them." Without remorse, he endures all its horrors ; without guilt, all its shame. The supernatural visitation has perturbed his soul to its inmost depths ; all things else, all interest, all hopes, all affections, appear as futile, when the majestic shadow comes lamenting from its place of torment, to "shake him with thoughts beyond the reaches of his soul."

Was Hamlet really destitute of energy and moral courage, or was his conduct merely the result of a position in which by one too "much reflecting on these things," no one course could be chosen, because all seemed equally advisable, or equally dangerous ? Professor Moir asserts that on this subject no two men think, or probably ever will think, alike. The circumstances of Hamlet's life, as exhibited by Shakespeare, do not, he considers, afford the conditions out of which the problem of his character is to be evolved ; so that it will ever, in Schlegel's phrase, remain like one of those irrational equations, in which a fraction of unknown magnitude remains, that will never admit of solution.

The charm is therefore said to lie mainly in its mystery ; but the mystery of Hamlet's character is regarded but as

the type and shadow of the still greater mystery and perplexity of existence itself—a thought which meets us at every turn as we peruse this tragedy, and haunts us like a spectre that will not depart. In Hamlet we are taught to see a picture of humanity “in single opposition, hand to hand,” with a merciless and iron destiny, which even from our own breasts, from the very nobility and activity of our faculties, draws forth the armoury of slings and arrows, with which it harasses, and eventually overpowers us. Could Hamlet, remarks the critic of Shakspeare in Germany, have dulled the edge of that apprehension which makes him “like a god ;” could he have said to his restless intellect, “Peace, be still ;” could he have been contented with the outward shows and most obvious consequences of things, instead of endeavouring to exhaust all their remote and possible relations, all might have been well,—for then the power of free action might have remained to him, and in freedom of action he would have been happy. “But this he cannot do : his intellect demands exercise, and he cannot live except in an element of inquiry.” If we first oppose the speculative to the active, and then make a farther distinction between the speculative and the contemplative, the union of the two latter may best be represented, thinks Professor Masson, in the character of Hamlet—a student from the university, daring into all questions, and fertile at every moment in new generalities and pregnant forms of expression ; but whose peculiarity consists in this, that far back in his mind there lie certain permanent thoughts and conceptions towards which he always reverts when left alone, and from which he has ever to be roused afresh when anything is to be done.* S. T. Coleridge forcibly pictures Hamlet flying from the sense of reality, and seeking a reprieve from the pressure of its duties in that ideal activity, the overbalance of which,

* “It is this tendency to relapse into a few favourite, and, as it were, constitutional trains of thought, that makes the contemplative character. Nor is it difficult to see in what thought it is, above all others, that the contemplative mind will always find its most appropriate food. Birth, death, the future ; the sufferings and misdeeds of man in this life, and his

with the consequent indisposition to action, is his disease. Labouring, as George Moir says, with his finite though noble faculties against infinity and eternity, the result is universal doubt : one by one all the props on which he leant have given way. "His mother's guilt has unhinged his confidence in the stability of the moral world ; and now nature herself seems to abandon the even tenor of her course, since the dead have burst their cerements, and are permitted to revisit the glimpses of the moon." The moral confusion in Hamlet's mind is now complete ; for all without and all within have alike lost their fixity. Nothing now seems good or bad "but thinking makes it so," and every course of action alike, since in none is certainty or tranquillity to be obtained, and all seem to lead only to the brink of the limbo of doubt. "Sick at last of the whirl that surrounds his vessel, he throws down the helm of free-will in despair, and seems to feel a wild exultation in drifting, at the will of Chance, over the boundless ocean of possibilities." Contempt of life, mingled with a certain nervous clinging to it, is held by Tieck to characterize Hamlet in most of the scenes ; a distinctive feature in those minds which have lost the first bloom of existence through offended pride and mortified feeling, and the calm steadiness of belief through restless investigation. La Rochefoucauld makes a maxim of it that "*l'imagination ne saurait inventer tant de diverses contrariétés qu'il y en a naturellement dans le cœur de chaque personne.*" And Tieck professes to discern in Hamlet a strange unfathomable union of folly and wisdom, of greatness of soul and pusillanimity, of love and hatred, of vanity and true pride : a lover who shows passion, yet on whose love we can place no reliance ; a man who speaks and feels like a faithful and noble friend, whose attractive amiableness renders him, when he pleases, the popular idol ; who, in a certain sense, per-

hopes of a life to come ; the littleness of us and our whole sphere of knowledge, and the awful relations in which we stand to the world of the supernatural—these, if any, are the permanent and inevitable objects of human contemplation and solicitude."—*Essays Biographical and Critical*, by David Masson, p. 375.

ceives so clearly all the relations by which he is surrounded, and yet is deceived on every hand : “ This mixture of heterogeneous positions which, though in a less degree, we so often meet with in real life ; those wonderful contradictions, under which every mind of high endowment more or less labours ; all these combined features afford the key to the universal popularity of this tragedy and this character.” In real life it is no unusual thing, Hartley Coleridge maintains, to meet with characters every whit as obscure as that of the Prince of Denmark ; men seemingly accomplished for the greatest actions, clear in thought, and dauntless in deed, still meditating mighty works, and urged by all motives and occasions to the performance,—whose existence is nevertheless an unperforming dream ; men of noblest, warmest affections, who are perpetually wringing the hearts of those whom they love best ; whose sense of rectitude is strong and wise enough to inform and govern a world, while their acts are the hapless issues of casualty and passion, and scarce to themselves appear their own. Hamlet is taken by Professor Masson to be a closer translation of Shakspeare’s own character than any other of his dramatized *personæ* : the same meditativeness, the same morbid reference at all times to the supernatural, the same inordinate development of the speculative faculty, the same intellectual melancholy, that are seen in the Prince of Denmark, seem to Milton’s biographer to have distinguished Shakspeare—a meditative, contemplative melancholy, embracing human life as a whole ; the melancholy of a mind incessantly tending from the real (τὰ φυσικὰ) to the metaphysical (τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ), and only brought back by external occasion from the metaphysical to the real. To recur to Hartley’s characterization of him,—he is an habitual dweller with his own thoughts,—preferring the possible to the real,—refining on the ideal forms of things, till the things themselves become dim in his sight, and all the common doings and sufferings, the obligations and engagements of the world, a weary task, stale and unprofitable. “ His abstract intellect is an overbalance for his active impulses. The death of his father, his mother’s marriage, and his own

exclusion from the succession—sorrow for one parent, shame for another, and resentment for himself,—tend still further to confirm and darken a disposition which the light heart of happy youth had hitherto counteracted.” And thus sorrow contracts around his soul, and shuts it out from cheerful light and wholesome air.*

Of Hamlet's closing soliloquy in the fourth scene of the

* Declaring Shakspeare to be the most national of poets, *le génie anglais personifié*, M. Villemain recognizes this representative power in him especially in *sa profondeur et sa mélancholie*. “Le monologue d’Hamlet ne devait-il pas être inspiré dans le pays de brouillards et du spleen?” It is in Shakspeare that Saint-Marc Girardin finds the source and *le principe* of that literature of suicide, of which he essayed to write the history; and Hamlet he takes as the accepted type *des héros du suicide*—a kind of hesitating and weaker Orestes, who is not certain about the crime he has to avenge, and who is still less certain of his power to fulfil the charge imposed on him, the awful mission revealed “avec un mystère qui trouble la raison d’Hamlet.” Orestes is urged on by fate, and does not hesitate. Hamlet, though *poussé aussi par la fatalité*, and under strict injunctions from the ghost of his father, retains his freedom indeed, but does so only to waver and fluctuate in his resolves, and to float continually from one idea to another. He reflects more than he acts, and pushes nothing to an end. Philarète Chasles, again, speaks of the Orestes of the ancients as a part infinitely better to play than that of Hamlet. Northern Europe, says he, asks rather for thought than action; and he even alleges of Shakspeare’s plays at large that they are “dramas qui ne sont pas des dramas et où l’action n’est qu’un prétexte.” As a Dane, a Northman, Hamlet is assumed by Wilhelm Meister to be a fair-haired youth, and “well-conditioned,” literally with an overgrowth of too, too solid flesh. “The fencing wearies him, he becomes easily heated by the exercise, and the Queen remarks, ‘He’s fat, and scant of breath.’ . . . And does not his melancholy and inactivity, his soft sorrow, and his perpetual indecision agree better with such a figure than with that of a slender, dark-haired youth?” from whom Goethe would expect more determination and resolution.

A French critic calls Hamlet the progenitor of Lord Byron’s heroes: the sombre and audacious irony of Manfred he traces directly back to *le monologue d’Hamlet*. The prince’s gloom is to French eyes distinctively and almost exclusively English. He has of late lost all his mirth, foregone all his customary exercises; man delights not him, nor woman neither,—“lik manye,” in Chaucer,

“Engendrud of humour melencolyk,
Byforne in his selle fantastyk,—

fourth act, Mr. Grant White has remarked, that it gives us the key to his indecision, in that self-anatomization which is the habit of such natures. They know the action of their own minds, and burrowing in the blind heaps of speculation which press upon them, they unearth only their own hidden motives. "They have an intellectual perception of the excellence of action; but, fascinated by musings which hardly attain the dignity of contemplation, their noble purposes never take form; and, led on through a dreamy labyrinth of speculation, they die before they reach the busy day of the actual world."* Coleridge in his table-talk defined Hamlet's character to be the prevalence of the abstracting and generalizing habit over the practical. He does not want courage, skill, will, or opportunity; but every incident sets him thinking; and it is curious, and at the same time strictly natural, that Hamlet, who all through the play seems reason itself, should be impelled, at last, by mere accident, to effect his object. "I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so," professed S. T. C., and very insincere or very unobservant must have been the listener that would say him nay.

In his notes on the play he discourses on the overbalance of the imaginative power as beautifully illustrated in the everlasting broodings and superfluous activities of Hamlet's

And shortly turned was al up-so-down
Bothe abytt and eek disposicioun."

Or as Propertius describes himself, in an access of apathy similar in kind if quite disparate in degree,

"Tot jam abiere dies, quam me nec cura theatri,
Nec tetigit campi, nec mea musa iuvat."

* The same critic elsewhere takes occasion to observe, that Shakespeare seems to have had an ever-present consciousness of the essential opposition between the faculties which lead men to reflect and those which impel them to act. "This consciousness often appears in his writings; but is never so clearly uttered as in these lines in the soliloquy of Hamlet (Act iv., Sc. 4):

"Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,—
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom

mind, which, unseated from its healthy relation, is constantly occupied with the world within, and abstracted from the world without,—giving substance to shadows, and throwing a mist over all commonplace actualities. “It is the nature of thought to be indefinite;—definiteness belongs to external imagery alone.” Hamlet feels this; his senses are in a state of trance, and he looks upon external things as hieroglyphics. His soliloquy, “O, that this too too solid flesh would melt!” springs from that craving after the indefinite, for that which is not, which most easily besets men of genius; and the self-delusion common to this temper of mind Coleridge takes to be finely exemplified in the character which Hamlet gives of himself:

“It cannot be
But I am pigeon-liver’d, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter.”

He mistakes the seeing his chains for the breaking them, delays action till action is of no use, and dies the victim of mere circumstance and accident.*

Sir Walter Scott held the part of Hamlet to be invested with so much obscurity, that it may be played in twenty different ways without the critic being able to say with certainty which best expresses the sense of the author. And this because Hamlet unites in his single person a variety of attributes, by bringing any of which more for-

And ever three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say, ‘This thing’s to do.’”

And yet this soliloquy and the scene in which it occurs are cut out of the play as it is acted; because, forsooth, it retards the action. When will people learn that *Hamlet* is *not* a drama of action?—*Shakspeare’s Scholar*, pp. 115, 419.

* Against this last proposition, Mr. Strachey, though a fervid admirer of Coleridge as “our true guide in the study of Shakspeare,” is fain to protest; alleging that Hamlet, being exactly the character that Coleridge describes him, does yet end by mastering that characteristic defect, and dies not a victim, but a martyr,—winning, not losing, the cause for which he dies. Shakspeare intended, this critic argues, to represent Hamlet as doubly a conqueror in death,—not only as an avenger and punisher of another’s crime, but as a victor over his own besetting sin of irresolution. The argument is perhaps more subtle than convincing.

ward, or throwing others farther into the background, the shading of the character is effectually changed. Sir Walter sees in him, accordingly, the predestined avenger called on to his task of vengeance by a supernatural voice—a prince resenting the intrusion of his uncle into his mother's bed and his father's throne—a son devoted to the memory of one parent and to the person of the other; but who, to do justice to his murdered father's memory, is compelled to outrage, with the most cutting reproaches, the ears of his guilty (for Scott assumes her to have been guilty) mother. Wittenberg has given him philosophy and the habits of criticism; nature has formed him social and affectionate; disappointment and ill-concealed resentment of family injuries have tinged him with misanthropy; the active world has given him all its accomplishments.

“The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form.”

To all these peculiar attributes Sir Walter adds the prince's love for Ophelia, and something which “resembles an incipient touch of insanity; for this, after all, is necessary to apologize and account for some parts of his conduct.” All which existing in Hamlet, the art of the performer is to distinguish the proper or most striking mode of exhibiting them; the author having “done little to help him in the management of the piece, which as a story indicates nothing decisive respecting the real character” of the prince. In this respect Hamlet is contrasted with Richard and Macbeth, and other of Shakspeare's most distinguished characters, who show themselves and their purposes, not by words and sentiments only, but by their actions, and whose actions therefore are the best commentaries on their characters and motives. Hamlet, on the contrary, “being passive almost through the whole piece, and only hurried into action in its conclusion, does nothing by which we can infer the precise meaning of much that he says.” Hence the critic's inference that there exists about the representation of Hamlet a latitude which scarcely belongs to that of any

other character in dramatic literature ; consisting as it does of many notes, the dwelling upon or the slurring of any one of which changes entirely the effect of the air.

Indeed, the unfitness of Hamlet for stage representation at all, was urged by Charles Lamb with what might be called vehemence, were Elia ever vehement. He contended that nine parts in ten of what Hamlet does, are transactions between himself and his moral sense—the effusions of his solitary musings, which he retires to holes and corners and the most sequestered parts of the palace to pour forth ; or rather they are the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting, reduced to words for the sake of the reader, who else must remain ignorant of what is passing there. These profound sorrows, these light-and-noise-abhorring ruminations, which the tongue scarce dares utter to deaf walls and chambers, how, asked the essayist, can they be represented by a gesticulating actor, who comes and mouths them out before an audience, making four hundred people his confidants at once ? He must insinuate them into his auditory by some trick of eye, tone, or gesture, as well as pronounce them *ore rotundo* ; or he fails. “And this is the way to represent the shy, negligent, retiring Hamlet !” Not that Elia argued against the acting of Hamlet at all, but he essayed to show how much Hamlet is made another thing by being acted.

Contrasting the hero of one of Müllner’s tragedies with Hamlet, Julius Hare expatiates on the blunder of making a man so anatomize his own heart and soul, as if a dispassionate observer were doing it for him ; much as if one were to versify the analytical and rhetorical accounts which critics have given of Shakspeare’s characters, and then to put them into the mouths of those characters. Müllner’s hero raves out his self-analysis in the ears of another ; whereas Hamlet, “that personification of human nature brooding over its own weaknesses and corruptions,” puts forth his reflections mainly in soliloquy ; and the individual, personal application of them is either swallowed up in the general confession of the frailty of human nature, or else they are the self-

reproaches and self-stimulants of irresolute weakness, "the foam which the sea leaves behind on the sands, when it sinks back into its own abysmal depths, and the dissonant muttering of the waves, that have been vainly lashing an immovable rock." Hazlitt takes the reason why this of all Shakspeare's plays is the one we think of oftenest, to be, that it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and that the distresses of the prince are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. "It is *we* who are Hamlet." Whatever happens to him we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. "He is a great moralizer; and what makes him worth attending to is, that he moralizes on his own feelings and experience." And he makes us more than spectators: we have not only the outward pageants and the signs of grief, but we "have that within which passeth show;" we read the thoughts of the heart, and catch the passions living as they rise. "The prince of philosophical speculators," Hazlitt styles him,—who, because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined idea his wish can form, misses it altogether: he scruples to trust the suggestions of the Ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Confessedly, he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it:

"How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! . . . I do not know
Why yet I live to say *this thing's to do*," etc.

Still he does nothing; and this very speculation on his own infirmity, adds William Hazlitt, only affords him another occasion for indulging it. Not from any want of attachment to his father, or of abhorrence of the murder and the murderer, is Hamlet thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. "His

ruling passion is to think, not to act; and any vague pretence that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes." He does himself only justice, said Schlegel, when he implies that there can be no greater dissimilarity than between him and Hercules. Schlegel indeed regards him as not solely impelled by necessity to artifice and dissimulation, but as having a natural inclination for crooked ways, and as being a hypocrite towards himself,—his far-fetched scruples being often mere pretexts to cover his want of determination. "Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else: from expressions of religious confidence he passes over to sceptical doubts; he believes in the Ghost of his father as long as he sees it, but as soon as it has disappeared, it seems to him almost in the light of a deception."* The elder Schlegel had, in fact, no liking for the Prince of Denmark, though he would scarcely have accepted and approved the theory of a popular living critic, who insists on "a thoroughly new reading of this little-understood character," and who takes Hamlet to have been hypochondriacal, capricious, pettish, misanthropic, soured, disappointed, tyrannical, selfish, depraved, yet with some noble aspirations, some godlike qualities. Another Byron in effect, and in the critic's full intent and purpose.

We have seen that Coleridge recognized within himself a certain affinity of character to Hamlet,—the weaker side of it. And Leigh Hunt's biographer can find for *him* "no known prototype except in the character of Hamlet," as regards the uncertainty of purpose due to an excessive anxiety to take into account all that might be advanced on every side, with the no less excessive wish to do what was right, to avoid every chance of wrong, and, if possible, to

* Referring to what has been censured as a contradiction, that Hamlet, in the soliloquy on self-murder, should speak of "that undiscover'd country from whose bourn no traveller returns,"—for was not the Ghost a returned traveller?—the same critic replies, that Shakspeare purposely wished to show that Hamlet could not fix himself in any conviction of any kind whatever.

abstain from causing any pain.* And, by the way, in the earliest of his prose works, Leigh Hunt had characterized Hamlet as "that amiable inconsistent," who talked when he should have acted, and acted when he should not even have talked, who with a bosom wrung with sensibility was unfeeling, and in his very passion for justice unjust, who in his misery had leisure for ridicule and in his revenge for benevolence; who in the most melancholy abstraction never lost the graces of mind or the elegances of manner, and was natural in the midst of artifice and estimable in the midst of error. "I now find in my own person," says Walter Lester, "how deeply Shakspeare had read the mysteries of men's conduct. Hamlet, we are told, was naturally full of fire and action. One dark discovery quells his spirit, unstrings his heart, and stales to him for ever the uses of the world. I now comprehend the change. It is bodied forth even in the humblest, who is met by a similar fate—even in myself." We may recall Victor Hugo's note of admiration for the "*admirable toute-puissance du poète ! il fait des choses plus hautes que nous, qui vivent comme nous. Hamlet, par exemple, est aussi vrai qu'aucun de nous, et plus grand. Hamlet est colossal, et pourtant réel. C'est que Hamlet, ce n'est pas vous, ce n'est pas moi, c'est nous tous. Hamlet, ce n'est pas un homme, c'est l'homme.*" This is Hazlitt's epigrammatic dictum expanded and epigrammatized anew.

If Hamlet and Polonius were living now, muses Pisistratus Caxton, Polonius would have a much better chance of being a Cabinet Minister, though Hamlet would unquestionably

* On another page we read : "The likeness to Hamlet was not lost even in a sort of aggressive conscientiousness." And on yet another : "If he may be compared to Hamlet, it was Hamlet buckling himself to hard work, and performing with vigour and conscientious completeness." This last passage occurs in the course of Mr. Thornton Hunt's argument that his father was no mere easy sentimentalist, whatever the world in general, and the creator of Harold Skimpole in particular, may have thought or implied to the contrary, but constant in hard work, and indefatigable in laborious research.

be a much more intellectual character. "What would become of Hamlet? Heaven knows! Dr. Arnold said from his experience of a school, that the difference between one man and another was not mere ability—it was energy." If so, *tant pis* for the Prince of Denmark and his chances in modern public life.

It is a commonplace in the criticism of comparative literature to contrast Hamlet with Orestes. The historian of *Athens: its Rise and Fall* contrasts him with Electra. Electra, he observes, sees not in Clytemnestra a mother, but the murderess of a father. "The doubt and the compunction of the modern Hamlet are unknown to her more masculine spirit." She lives on but in the hope of her brother's return, and of revenge. It is of that brother, Professor Lowell is treating when he remarks that, to a Greek, the element of Fate, with which his imagination was familiar, while it heightened the terror of the catastrophe,* would have supplied the place of that impulse in mere human nature which our habit of mind demands for its satisfaction. The fulfilment of an oracle, he goes on to say, the anger of a deity, the arbitrary doom of some blind and purposeless power superior to man, the avenging of blood to appease an injured ghost,—any one of these might make that seem simply natural to a contemporary of Sophocles which is intelligible to us only by study and reflection. And the critic deems it not a little curious that Shakspeare should have made the last of these motives, which was conclusive for Orestes, insufficient for Hamlet, who so perfectly typifies the introversion and complexity of modern thought as compared with ancient, in dealing with the problems of life and action. And the American professor surmises it to have been not without intention (for who may venture to assume a want of intention in the world's highest poetic genius at its full maturity?) that Shakspeare brings in his hero "fresh from the University of Wittenburg, where Luther, who entailed upon us the responsibility of private

* Referring to Mr. Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*.

judgment, had been Professor." The dramatic motive in the *Electra* and *Hamlet*, it is added, is essentially the same; but what a difference between the straightforward bloody-mindedness of Orestes and the metaphysical punctiliousness of Hamlet! Yet each, the critic concludes, was natural in his own way, and each would have been unintelligible to the audience for which the other was intended.

Does Hamlet finally attain deliverance from his disease of will? Shakspeare, says Professor Dowden, has left the answer to that question doubtful: probably if anything could supply the link which was wanting between the purpose and the deed, it was the achievement of some supreme action; and the last moments of Hamlet's life are well spent, and for energy and foresight are the noblest moments of his existence; he snatches the poisoned bowl from Horatio, and saves his friend; he gives his dying voice for Fortinbras, and saves his country. The rest is silence:—

"Had I but time—as this fell sergeant, Death,
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you."

But he has not told. Let us not too readily assume that we "know the stops" of Hamlet, that we can "pluck out the heart of his mystery."*

* It has been truly said that only one who feels Hamlet's strength should venture to speak of Hamlet's weakness. "That in spite of difficulties without and inward difficulties, he still clings to his terrible duty,—letting it go indeed for a time, but returning to it again, and in the end accomplishing it—implies strength. He is not incapable of vigorous action,—if only he be allowed no chance of thinking the fact away into an idea." But all his action is sudden and fragmentary, not continuous and coherent. His feelings are not under control, but quickly fatigue themselves, and are likened accordingly by Hebler (in his *Aufsätze über Shakespeare*) to a dog who now hurries before his master, and now drops behind, but will not advance steadily.—See *Shakspeare: His Mind and Art*, pp. 146 seq., 160.

"You, Gigadibs, who, thirty years of age,
Write stately for Blackwood's Magazine,
Believe you see two points in Hamlet's soul
Unseized by the Germans yet—which view you'll print." . . .

Bishop Blougram's Apology.

§ III.

HAMLET'S SIMULATED MADNESS.

It has been incidentally observed by M. Littré, that the increasing tendency, as civilization advances, to substitute purely psychological for miraculous solutions, is strikingly illustrated by a comparison of Orestes in Grecian drama with Hamlet in English: the subject of both is essentially the same, he says; a murdered king, a guilty wife, a son distracted between his duty to his dead father and to his living mother; but while the Greek found it necessary to bring the Furies upon the scene to account for the mental paroxysms of Orestes, the Englishman deemed the natural play and conflict of the emotions amply sufficient to account for the sufferings of Hamlet.

But did the Englishman mean Hamlet to be insane, in any such sense as Orestes was? Insanity, as an American professor remarks, is of so many degrees, and so multiform, that you can scarce define it; the English language, though not highly esteemed by all for its copiousness, furnishing, it may be, a dozen different words to express the various morbid conditions of the intellect. And Mr. H. Reed takes the difficulty with respect to Hamlet to lie, not so much in forming a just conception of the state of his mind, as in attaching a precise signification to this word "insanity." At least there need be, he argues, no such difficulty, were it not oftener caused by the logic of a contracted criticism—the propensity to narrow verbal comment—which will misapprehend the whole drift of a character and destroy the spirit of a drama by dwelling upon detached passages and expressions. The truth of the case he takes to be this: that, from a combination of influences, the mind of Hamlet was in a state of undue susceptibility of both unnatural excitement and depression; and then further agitated by a supernatural visitation, by which, in his own words, he felt his "disposition horribly shaken with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." This visible and audible communion with the dead

has so convulsed all the spiritual elements of his nature, that he becomes conscious of peril to the sovereignty of his reason; and this very consciousness, the apprehension of insanity, suggests to an intellect so active the thought of feigning madness, of "putting an antic disposition on,"—which device would give him an unwonted freedom, while control might be relied on from his habitual strength of intellect. "It comes then to this—that there was disorder in the mind—a disturbance of his intellect, something more than that which he was feigning; but, if this question of insanity involve the question whether his mind ceased to be under the mastery of his will, assuredly there was no such aberration." Had he stood at the bar of an English court of justice, charged with the murder of Polonius, an English judge would have peremptorily summed up for conviction, whatever the "mad doctors" might please to say.

Villemain considers that Shakspeare, by a singular combination, has mingled the two kinds of madness, real and feigned, (both of which he has so fully represented elsewhere,) in "*le personnage bizarre d'Hamlet*," conjoining in his case the flashes of pure reason, the tricks of a calculated derangement, and the involuntary sallies of a really disordered intellect. Barante says, "*La folie du jeune prince est bien donnée comme une feinte*." The acute author of *Essays on social subjects* remarks, "Hamlet, in our eyes, was not mad, but he shirked a task imposed upon him; and his mind, being of heroic proportions, suffered the pangs of indecision in a heroic degree." The shrewd clerical essayist who used to write such lively *Letters to Eusebius*, designated Hamlet as a puzzle to all the world except to Shakspeare himself, who chose to make his picture more true by leaving it as a puzzle to the world. "Hamlet has been pronounced mad from his conduct to Ophelia, mainly if not solely,"—a ready solution of the incomprehensible.* "*Il lui parle tantôt en amant et*

* Swift was a Hamlet to Stella and Vanessa; and as there are two against him, *versus* Hamlet's one love, critics pronounce him doubly mad. It is a very ingenious but not very satisfactory way of getting out of the difficulty."—*Essays* by the Rev. John Eagles, p. 217.

tantôt en fou," says St.-Marc Girardin, "et ce bizarre mélange de paroles contradictoires finit par égarer aussi la raison de la jeune Ophélie." Hamlet's character, said Beattie, though perfectly natural, is so very uncommon, that few professed critics even can enter into it: *sorrow, indignation, revenge, and consciousness of his own irresolution, tear his heart; "the peculiarity of his circumstances often obliges him to counterfeit madness, and the storm of passions within him often drives him to the verge of real madness." Steevens declared that he must be madman or villain. The anonymous author of an essay on the Feigned Madness of Hamlet, meets Johnson's objection that for this feigned madness there appears no adequate cause, the prince doing nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity,—by showing the feint to be not quite so unconnected with the plot as the doctor would represent it; though, after all, it is in Hamlet himself rather than in the plot that the sufficient reason of this simulated madness is to be found. And to wear the wild mask of insanity was not more toilsome to his spirit, than to support that other counterfeit of a smooth, unruffled, and contented aspect. If he must mingle with the crowd, "we feel that an overstrained levity, a wild, bitter, uncertain, variable speech, would be the manner and style of conversation into which he would spontaneously fall." The feint of madness covered all—even the sarcasm, and disgust, and turbulence, which it freed in some measure from an intolerable restraint. That mingled bitterness and levity which served for the representation of insanity, was often the most faithful expression of his feelings; and it is justly contended that a great portion of the beauty of the play would be lost, if we looked upon his extravagant speeches as cold inventions to support a fictitious madness, and did not keep in view their intimate connexion, and the connexion of the counterfeit of madness itself, with the real temper of the man. His imitations of lunacy, and the spontaneous expression of his

* "Dr. Johnson, who so lucidly describes the mind of Polonius, has left us in his observations clear proof that he did not understand that of Hamlet."—*Macready's Reminiscences*, vol. i., p. 49.

perturbed and over-excited feelings, are at times scarcely distinguishable, so naturally do they flow the one into the other. "He deals unsparingly his wild and whirling speech in parts of the play where he cannot be suspected of counterfeiting madness—where he is addressing his confidential friends, and where he is in the most solemn and tragical situations of the drama." Is it surprising that one who spoke in this vein in his most confidential moments, should in his intercourse with courtiers and coxcombs, "think it meet to put an antic disposition on"? Towards the close of the piece we find him laying aside the feint of madness, which had never in fact been very sedulously supported,—and doing so without any seeming embarrassment.* Whatever had been the fate of the young Prince of Denmark, he would still, according to this reading of his character, have been one of those who are for ever musing, with perplexed thought, upon themselves—their own inscrutable nature—and on mankind at large, and the little good that the grand world answers; one of those who find all action struck with futility, yet recognize that repose without action is impossible; whose mind feeds upon itself, and who never have a passion or purpose but the next moment they turn it into a subject of mere reflection. Hamlet, thus constituted, is plunged in circumstances of supernatural horror: the tomb has yielded up its dead, that he might be sent upon a mission of blood; the reflective spirit of the man is overwhelmed; he seeks relief in bursts of extravagant and fictitious levity; and, in this mood, he "picks up the mask of idiotism, and brandishes it not unwillingly; assuming to himself, at the same time, a crafty purpose, which, being little suited to his nature, is but loosely adhered to." In short, a mind unhinged, vexed, tortured, and bewildered, adopts as a scheme of action what, after all, is more impulse than policy. "He assumes madness to conceal from himself

* "As the excitement of his mind wears itself out, Hamlet assumes an ordinary tone. He jests with the courtier, Osric, as he would have done in his gayer days, and, from that time to the conclusion of the drama he presents to us the aspect of one exhausted by the violence and intensity of his feelings."—*On the Feigned Madness of Hamlet*.

and others his real distemper," said Hartley Coleridge, who scouted the notion of his being mad, as Lear and Ophelia are mad; for neither his sensitive organs, nor the operations of his intellect are impaired: his mind is lord over itself, but it is not master of his will; the ebb and flow of his feelings are no longer obedient to calculable impulses—he is like a star, drawn by the approximation of a comet, out of the range of solar influence. The elder Coleridge speaks of such a mind as Hamlet's as being near akin to madness; "great wit to madness nearly is allied,"—by "wit" meaning that greatness of genius which led Hamlet to a perfect knowledge of his own character,—too weak to be able to carry into act, whatever the strength of motive, his own most obvious duty. "His madness is assumed, when the heroine is thrown in his way as a decoy," but he has made up his mind to assume it before that. Mr. Charles Reade vigorously attacks the theory of his real insanity; laying stress on his telling his friends that he shall feign it, and swearing them not to reveal the reason; and he "keeps his word, and does it as cleverly as if his name was David or Brutus instead of Hamlet; indeed, like Edgar, he rather overdoes it, and so puzzles his enemies in the play, and certain German criticasters and English mad doctors in the closet, and does not puzzle his bosom friend in the play one bit." Schlegel compliments him on acting the part of madness with unrivalled power, convincing the persons who are sent to examine into his supposed loss of reason, merely by telling them unwelcome truths, and rallying them with the most caustic wit. In the description which Polonius gives of Hamlet's madness for Ophelia's love, the symptoms are made much stronger in the original copy of the play:

"He straightway grew into a melancholy;
From that into a fast; then into distraction;
Then into a sadness; from that into a madness;
And so by continuance and weakness of the brain,
Into this frenzy which now possesses him."

It is curious, observes Mr. Charles Knight on this passage, that in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* we have the stages

of melancholy, madness, and frenzy, indicated as described by Celsus; and Burton himself mentions frenzy as the worst stage of madness, "clamorous, continual." Now in the amended version of the play, the symptoms are made much milder;—a sadness, a fast, a watch, a weakness, a lightness, and a madness. The reason of this change appears to Mr. Knight to be tolerably clear; Shakspeare did not, he contends, either in his first sketch or his amended copy, intend his audience to believe that Hamlet was essentially mad; and he removed, therefore, the strong expressions which might encourage that belief. In a later book of the *Studies on Shakspeare* we read of "the disturbance of Hamlet's intellect—not madness, even in the popular sense of the term,—certainly not madness, physiologically speaking, but unfixedness, derangement, we would have said, had not that word become a sort of synonym for madness." Coleridge, in speaking of the assumption by Hamlet of what has been called "an improbable eccentricity," attributes to him the disposition to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild transition to the ludicrous, a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on the flights of delirium; and he adds, "For you may perhaps observe that Hamlet's wildness is but half false." Dr. Conolly has devoted a little volume to an examination of the problem, was Hamlet mad from the beginning of the play, or mad only at certain crises of the action; or did he feign madness, like Ulysses or Brutus, for the furtherance of his own designs? And in the Doctor's view, Hamlet is always *insanurient*; that is to say, he is of a temperament in which madness lies very near the surface, and which some violent shock or unlooked-for calamity is sure to develope into disease. Like other critics, Dr. Conolly admits that Hamlet has paroxysms of madness, amounting at times to acute mania; he differs from them only in denying that the prince is ever really sane, until indeed the closing scene. "Hamlet, in our eyes," writes a Saturday Reviewer, "was not mad, but he shirked a task imposed upon him; and his mind, being of heroic proportions, suffered the pangs of indecision in an heroic degree." Not the same writer, perhaps, but the

same *Review*, in its critical notice of Dr. Conolly's book,* cites the instance of Coleridge, (who self-confessedly had something of Hamlet in him,) as lacking vigour, and suffering from infirmity of purpose, so that he was for ever dallying with the event, as Hamlet dallied with the duty imposed upon him by the sin and calamity of his house.

As Professor Dowden takes it, Hamlet assumes madness as a means of concealing his actual disturbance of mind: his over-excitability may betray him; but if it be a received opinion that his mind is unhinged, such an access of over-excitement will pass unobserved and unstudied. "Madness possesses exquisite immunities and privileges. From the safe vantage of unintelligibility he can delight himself by uttering his whole mind and sending forth his words among the words of others, with their meaning disguised, as he himself must be, clothed in an antique garb of parable, dark sayings which speak the truth in a mystery."† And on this showing, as far as his active powers are concerned, the assumed madness is a misfortune, for it tends to retard his action: he turns critic and observer, and can stand at ease in that capacity.

It is argued with force by Professor J. R. Lowell, that if Hamlet is mad, there is no tragic motive left in the tragedy; that he would be a fit subject for Bedlam, but not for the stage: we might have pathology enough, but no pathos. Ajax is said to first become tragic when he recovers his wits. If Hamlet is irresponsible, the whole play is a chaos. He "drifts" through the whole tragedy. "The scheme of simulated insanity is precisely the one he would have been likely to hit upon, because it enabled him to follow his own bent, and to drift with an apparent purpose, postponing decisive action by the very means he adopts to arrive at its

* A Study of Hamlet. By John Conolly, M.D. 1863:

† Referring to the doctors of the insane who have been studious of the state of Hamlet's mind,—Doctors Ray, Kellogg, Conolly, Maudsley, Bucknill,—the Professor says they are unanimous in wishing to put Hamlet under judicious medical treatment, but they find it harder than Polonius did to hit upon a definition of madness:—

"For to define true madness,
What is't but to be nothing else but mad?"

accomplishment." The one thing he could not do was to bring himself to *act*, unless when surprised by a sudden impulse of suspicion,—as where he kills Polonius; and there he "could not see his victim." It has been objected, however, that Mr. Lowell draws a line too hard and fast on the vexed question of insanity. Is it not, we are asked, on good authority, nearer to the truth of nature, and more consistent with the highest tragical pathos, to conceive of this contemplative self-questioning character as really swayed at times across the debatable ground that separates sanity from insanity, and swayed all the more readily through the very process of his simulation? And such a conception, it is contended, is not only true to nature, but eminently likely also to have attracted and been developed by that analytical genius which meets one at every turn in the Sonnets.

§ IV.

HAMLET AND OPHELIA.

GOETHE says of the love of Hamlet for Ophelia, that it "was not the result of warm passion, but the silent expression of his sweet wants." An admired and, in some respects, admirable *Blackwood* critic, can see in Ophelia nothing which would make her the object of an engrossing passion to so majestic a spirit as Hamlet. On the other hand, Mrs. Jameson contends that Hamlet's love for Ophelia is deep, real, and just the kind of love which such a man would feel for such a woman. "The mighty intellect, the capacious, soaring, penetrating genius of Hamlet may be represented, without detracting from its grandeur, as reposing upon the tender virgin innocence of Ophelia, with all that deep delight with which a superior nature contemplates the goodness which is at once perfect in itself, and of itself unconscious." What excuse, what explanation can be offered for his wringing her kind, fond heart, with words such as man should

never speak to woman? The question is started and pursued by Hartley Coleridge, who argues that Shakspeare, with his reverence for womanhood, never would have needlessly exposed Ophelia to insult, were there not some profound heart-truth to be developed in the exhibition. For one thing, this expositor takes it to prove the fatal danger of simulating madness: stammering and squinting are often caught by mimicry; and he who wilfully distorts his mind, for whatever purpose, may stamp its lineaments with lasting deformity.* "To play the madman is 'hypocrisy against the devil.' Hamlet, in fact, through the whole drama, is perpetually sliding from his assumed wildness into sincere distraction." His best excuse Hartley finds in words from his own father's *Christabel*,

"And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."

He takes Hamlet to have truly loved Ophelia in his happy youth, when all his thoughts were fair and sweet as she; but his father's death, his mother's frailty, have wrought sad alteration in his soul, and made the very form of woman fearful and suspected: his best affections are blighted, and Ophelia's love, that young and tender flower, escapes not the general infection. His acceptance of the ghostly commission has now severed him from human hopes and joys—he is henceforth vowed and dedicated to other work than courtship and dalliance: the spirit that ordained him to be an avenger, forbade him to be a lover. "Yet, with an inconstancy as natural as it is unreasonable, he clings to what he has renounced." Perplexed and stung, he rushes into Ophelia's chamber, and, in amazed silence, makes her the confidante of his grief and distraction, the cause of which she must not know. Concluding that he is mad for her love, she enters readily into what to her appears an innocent

* "Mais ce petit charlatanisme n'est pas sans danger pour nous-mêmes : on commence par vouloir duper les autres, on finit souvent par se duper soi-même; on gagne involontairement l'exaltation qu'on singeait, et on perd le bon sens pour avoir voulu, comme Hamlet, jouer avec la folie."—Saint-Marc Girardin, *Littérature dramatique*, t. i., § vi.

scheme to induce him to lighten his overcharged bosom, and ask of her the peace which unasked she may not offer. So she steals upon his solitude, while, weary of his unexecuted task, he argues with himself the expediency of suicide. "Surprised as with a sudden light, his first words are courteous and tender, till he begins to suspect that she too is set on to pluck out the heart of his mystery ; and then, actually maddened by his self-imposed necessity of personating madness, he discharges upon her the bitterness of blasted love, the agony of a lover's anger, as if determined to extinguish in himself the last feeling that harmonized not with his fell purpose." And this, to Hartley Coleridge, was the most terrifically affecting scene in Shakspeare; neither Lear, nor Othello, to his thinking, being plunged so deep in the gulf of misery.

Overshadowed by the dread Shadow of death, the dread Presence not to be put by, his love for Ophelia is by Hamlet himself ranked among those "trivial fond records" which he has deeply sworn to erase from his heart and brain. "He has no thought to link his terrible destiny with hers; he cannot marry her: he cannot reveal to her, young, gentle, innocent as she is, the terrific influences which have changed the whole current of his life and purposes." Over-acting in his distraction the painful part to which he had tasked himself, he is likened by the refined author of *Characteristics of Women*, to that judge of the Areopagus, who being occupied with graver matters, flung from him the little bird which had sought refuge in his bosom, and with such angry violence, that unwittingly he killed it.

Few indeed can Tieck have found to accept his paradox, ingeniously as the evidence may have been pieced together—that Shakspeare meant throughout the drama to intimate that Ophelia had, in the intoxication and abandonment of passion, already yielded to the prince so much, that the warnings and hints of Laertes come too late. Tieck deems it worthy of the great poet, that this relation of the parties, like so many others in the play, remains an enigma ; but he insists that only in this point of view does Hamlet's con-

duct attain its full bitterness, or Ophelia's grief and madness, its consistency. For, of all the characters, that of Ophelia appears to the author of the *Dramaturgische Blätter* to have been the most misunderstood; and he admits the difficulty of giving any clearness to "this enchanting combination, in which vanity, coquetry, the influence of the senses, love, art, and seriousness, deep melancholy, and madness, show themselves in succession, or at the same moment." The opponents of his view justly ask what point in Ophelia's character is not sufficiently explained by the simple consideration, that she had early surrendered her young heart to the "rose and expectancy of the fair state;" that he in happier times had loved her once, and led her to believe so; that now, with a heart lacerated by misfortune, distracted by doubt, oppressed by the load of a mighty undertaking laid upon it without the power of execution, he seems to have forgotten the past, and that his language breathes only bitter irony, suspicion of female virtue or constancy; that this wild commotion of mind in her supposed lover soon appears converted into madness; that her father is dead, murdered by that lover—her brother gone—not a friend left to protect, to advise, or to console? Is there not, as Professor Moir asked, in all this, working on a frame of unusually nervous tenderness, a sufficient explanation of her grief and madness; and in the madness itself, a sufficient explanation of all those equivocal expressions which escape from her in the eclipse of reason? * Is it necessary

*

" Poor Ophelia

Divided from herself, and her fair judgment;
Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts."

But it were to make a beast of her indeed, to regard what escapes from her in lunacy as characteristic of her while sane. It is a recognized fact that pure-minded women have often been known, under the influence of fever or mania, to give utterance to depraved language, and to express sentiments wholly inconsistent with their real character and moral nature. "It is a fact that the most virtuous women have in early years been subject to some verbal contamination and are none the worse for it, and it is a fact that the pure woman never would have uttered base and revolting words had she not been under the influence of actual disease." It is as in the well-known story of the illiterate German girl, who, in the height of fever, was heard talking Latin, Greek, and Hebrew: whole sheets of her

to add to all this, as a cause, the consciousness of guilt, the misery occasioned by remorse on the part of one seduced?—But Tieck is chargeable not only with gratuitously and most indefensibly assuming the guilt of Ophelia, but also with, as a consequence, going on to deny that Hamlet really feels any affection for her. The extent and degree of Hamlet's love it

ravings were written out, and were found to consist of sentences intelligible in themselves, but having slight connexion with each other : all trick was out of the question, and the mystery was solved when it became known that at nine years old she had been charitably taken by an old Protestant pastor, a great Hebrew scholar, in whose house she lived until his death, and whose custom it had been to walk up and down a passage of his house into which the kitchen door opened, and to read to himself with a loud voice out of his books—which books being ransacked, so many of the passages taken down at the girl's bedside were identified, that there could be no reasonable doubt as to their source. "A succession of unintelligible sounds had been so caught by the ear that years afterwards the girl could in her delirium repeat them." But there was no moral element, or immoral, in her use of the words.

A judicious critic finds it difficult to agree with Mr. Seafeld's ideas of the value of remembered dreams as a trustworthy criterion of the sound morality of the dreamer. Mr. Seafeld's axiom, *in somnio veritas*, seems to his critic more epigrammatic than true. In dreams, he thinks, "each man's character is disintegrated, so that he may see the elements of which it is composed." His reviewer would rather say that a dream disintegrates the entire character of humanity, and eliminates the self-governing sense altogether ; that every dreamer may innocently find himself performing in imagination any folly, any wickedness, any act of genius, benevolence, magnificence, or meanness, which can enter into the mind of any man to conceive or execute. And thus there are, unhappily, accesses of delirium, when, to apply Chateaubriand's language, "*des hommes ordinairement chastes et modérés dans leur propos, vomissent des outrages d'une grossièreté et d'une atrocité incroyable.*" Robert Story of Rosneath might naturally be shocked at hearing a man so eminent in sanctity as John Chalmers roar out terrific blasphemies on his death-bed ; but he that had thus seemed possessed of the devil, died in perfect peace notwithstanding, when the tyranny was overpast ; nor was the good pastor a man to impute to his account the aberrations of disease.

Kathrina's poet has a record to the purpose :

" At my mother's door
I stood and listened . . . I stood like stone,
Without the power to speak, the while she rained
Her maledictions on me, and in words
Fit only for the damned, accused my life

may be difficult, Franz Horn remarks, to determine; but he who loved his great father with such reverential tenderness, could not in another and voluntary attachment be false to himself. That he pours all the weight of his despair and his incipient madness upon Ophelia, speaks in favour of his love; though love indeed in its most miserable form, which existing

Of crimes my language could not name, and deeds
Which only outcast wretches do."

Goethe declined to assent to those among Ophelia's commentators who submit that Shakspeare ought to have written songs of a different kind for her, since "expressions of double meaning and indelicate allusions do not beseeem the pure lips of a noble-minded girl." He answered, that a deep meaning is concealed in these peculiarities and in this seeming impropriety; for he held that we are from the first apprised of what engages the maiden's thoughts, and that she had often tried like an unskilful nurse to lull her senses to repose with ballads, which but kept them the more awake. And so at length, as Goethe views the case, when all self-control is at an end, and the secrets of her heart appear upon her tongue, even in the presence of royalty she takes delight in the echo of her "loose but dearly-loved songs." To some, this will differ but in degree of offensiveness from Tieck's assumption of her having given Hamlet all. Referring to a copy of Mrs. Jameson's *Characteristics of Women*, annotated with autograph marginalia by Tieck, Professor Maurice avowed himself wishful to know whether his coarse apprehensions of the character of Ophelia, natural enough to one who contemplated it chiefly with regard to the stage, could sustain themselves against the judgment of one who looked at it in relation to actual life. On the other hand, Mr. R. Grant White twits Charles Knight with a "miscomprehension" of Ophelia's character, and cannot but wonder where he finds anything in Shakspeare's delineation of it to cause him to lessen his ideas of her at finding her as plain-spoken as some readings of the text make her. "What does he think of the songs which she sings when derangement removes the restraint of propriety from her mind? On what do they show her thoughts to have been, in a great measure, fixed?—for it is to be borne in mind that she is not distracted or wild, but simply unsettled." This view of Ophelia's case would admit of no palliation of her offences against propriety, on the score of her subjection to some mode of insanity, say of the choreic type, when, according to Dr. Forbes Winslow, filthy ejaculations, terrible oaths, blasphemous expressions, and allusions the most obscene, alternate with the most exalted sentiments of love, affection, virtue, purity, and religion. "I have often known patients . . . utter one moment sentiments that would do honour to the most orthodox divines, and immediately afterwards use language

in a wounded spirit cannot help lacerating in turn. "In the state of mind in which Hamlet feels himself, love appears something too lovely for this miserable world: despair dare not love, but rather finds a wretched pleasure in tormenting the object of its affection." Even the strangely cold expression of Hamlet on hearing of her death, "What! the fair Ophelia?" affords no argument against the reality or the original depth of his affection; and even if it be not easy to account for his apparent indifference to the tidings at first, how much would the difficulty be increased, urges George Moir, on the supposition of Tieck! How deep would then be our contempt for the prince's selfishness and cruelty throughout in his treatment of his victim! But how stands the case with regard to Hamlet's exclamation? We are reminded that he is at the moment a fugitive escaped from shipwreck, sick in body and in mind, his thoughts occupied with a thousand things, his spirits all bound up as in a dream; the words at first awaken no sensation, he replies to them in a state of half-consciousness—but when the reality breaks upon him, when he sees the object of his youthful affection, whose heart he had helped to break, laid in the cold grave before him, then the torrent bursts through the icy crust that covers it, and even in the passionate vehemence, exaggeration, and insane violence of the scene that follows, the wildness of

only expected to proceed from the mouths of the most depraved of human beings." And this phase of mental aberration is said to be often seen unassociated with any form of delusion or hallucination whatever. But it would be cruel to infer from the ramblings of any unsettled mind the character of that mind in its sane estate—to make characteristics of what are unnatural vagaries and anomalies. Mrs. Gaskell tells us of the fevered man Davenport, that he "cursed and swore, which surprised Wilson, who knew his piety in health, and who did not know the unbridled tongue of delirium." Mrs. Edwardes has a passing but pregnant reference to the pertinacity with which the burthen of an unhallowed song will "ring through and torture some pure soul in the delirium of brain-fever." We call to mind Charles de Bernard's "*telle, que le monde juge froide, qui effraierait par l'audace de ses secrètes pensées l'imagination la plus virile.*" Here, indeed, a disposition to vice is implied. But where the disposition is the other way, the soothing style of Milton's Adam to his agitated Eve is of legitimate application: "Yet be not sad,

his language, and the scuffle in the grave, we perceive exactly the result which love, remorse, disgust at the factitious exhibition of feeling by her brother, and some tinge of incipient insanity in himself, might, under such circumstances, be expected to produce in a mind like that of Hamlet. Horn pictures him roused into noble energy by the sight of Ophelia's pale corpse—roused as all true grief is, when it stands side by side with the loud but empty affectation of sorrow. "If we feel a momentary emotion when Laertes springs into his sister's grave, it is dispelled the instant he begins to talk of Pelion and Olympus." It is by this "empty and hollow show of grief"* that Hamlet is excited: he feels that, ill as he may have acted, *his* grief is purer, deeper, and more real; he feels that he, too, has often dealt too much in words—but always in solitude, in self-delusion; he has never laid claim to the character of a hero by the wordy vehemence of his language in public, or the theatrical exaggeration of his feelings. Hence the moral, if not physical, superiority he maintains over Laertes in the contest in the grave—hence the interest awakened by his impassioned protestation,

"I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum."

Professor Dowden's answer to his own question, "What is Ophelia?" is out of the common, and, like every other

Evil into the mind of God or man May come and go, so unapproved, and leave No spot or blame behind." The Flower of Furness, what read we of her, in Wilson's pathetic poem?

"Oh, not a word
Has meaning, or, if any meaning range
Among the alter'd syllabings of names
Familiar once and sacred, it is such
As well might break the hardest heart to hear,
Sinful, and like a poisonous breath distill'd
Even from the dews of those most innocent lips,
Even from the sweet stream of those innocent veins,
Even from the pure drops of that innocent heart,
Whose worst confessions, before God and man,
A little while ago were scarcely worth
The shedding of a tear!"

* Shakspeare Erläutert von Franz Horn.

view of his which diverges from accepted notions, will repay careful study. In contrast with the Juliet who delivers Romeo from his dream of self-conscious egoistic feeling into the reality of anguish and of joy, he regards Ophelia as absolutely incompetent to deliver Hamlet from his sad life of brooding thought, from his weakness and melancholy. "What can Ophelia do? Nothing. She is a tender little fragile soul, who might have grown to her slight perfection in some neat garden-plat of life." Hamlet is assumed by his critic to fall into the too frequent error of supposing that a man gains rest and composure through the presence of a nature weak, gentle, and clinging; and that the very incapacity of such a nature to share the troubles of heart and brain which beset one, must be a source of refreshment and repose. And so it is allowed to be, for moments, when the pathos of slender joy, unaware of the great interests and sorrows of the world, touches us. But a strong nature, argues the Professor, was what Hamlet needed—not Ophelia's timidity and self-distrust, her incapable sweetness and gentleness of heart, her docility to all lawful guardians and governors. "Ophelia is decorous and timid, with no initiative in her own heart; unimaginative; choosing her phrases with a sense of maidenly propriety." When her father directs her to distrust the man she loves, to deny him her presence, to repel his letters, she has only her meek, little submission to utter, "I shall obey, my lord." She does not shrink from betraying the secrets of his weakness and his melancholy confided to her. When placed as a decoy, with a book of devotions in her hand, she "plays her part in a manner that betrays her." Hamlet had seen her praying, and felt himself drawn towards that lovely, child-like, innocent presence; but "he is now proportionately indignant." He believes Ophelia to be joined with the rest of them; to be an impostor, a spy; incapable of truth, of honour, of love. "With an almost savage zeal, which is underneath nothing but bitter pain, he pounces upon Ophelia's deceit."*

* The critics are said to be nearly equally divided in their estimates of Ophelia. "Flathe is extravagantly hostile to the Polonius family. Mr. Ruskin (Sesame and Lilies) may be mentioned among English writers as

Lamb rather favours the notion of Hamlet's asperity in his interviews with Ophelia being a profound artifice of love, to alienate her by affected discourtesies, and so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that loving intercourse which can no longer find a place amidst business so serious as that which he has to do. The truth is, according to this fine Shakspearian critic, that in all such deep affections as had subsisted between Hamlet and Ophelia, there is a stock of "supererogatory love," which in any great grief of heart, especially where that which preys upon the heart cannot be communicated, confers a kind of indulgence upon the grieved one to express itself, even to its heart's dearest object, in the language of a temporary alienation; but it is not alienation, it is a distraction purely, and so it always makes itself to be felt by that object: it is not anger, but grief assuming the appearance of anger,—love awkwardly counterfeiting hate, as sweet countenances when they try to frown. "In the scene with Ophelia in the third act," said Coleridge, "Hamlet is beginning with great and unfeigned tenderness; but perceiving her reserve and coyness, fancies there are some listeners, and then, to sustain his part, breaks out into all that coarseness."* This may be as purely a fancy as the one it assumes on Hamlet's part; but some exercise of fancy is perhaps inevitable in solving the problem to one's even

forming no favourable estimate of Ophelia;" and against Mrs. Jameson's authority, as that of a woman, Professor Dowden would set the authority of one of her sex in *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, ii., 16—36. For his own views, in detail, see pp. 138, 147 et seq., of *Shakspeare: His Mind and Art*.

* Hamlet's behaviour on the previous occasion of his surprising Ophelia, "sewing in her chamber," is one among the most convincing proofs, in Dr. Conolly's opinion, of the reality, and indeed of the depth, of his madness. "If we admit that the disordered dress might have been studied, and that the unbraced doublet, the fouled stockings ungartered and down-gyved, were merely disarranged for the purpose of acting an unmeaning or a cruel part, we cannot readily say the same of the pale and piteous look,

'As if he had been loosed out of hell
To speak of horrors.'

These descriptive particulars cannot have been perversely designed by

partial satisfaction. Of Ophelia herself, Coleridge elsewhere says, with another exercise of fancy, and such as betokens the poet in the critic, that in the beginning she lay like a little projection of land into a lake or stream, covered with spray-flowers, quietly reflected in the quiet waters, but at length is undermined or loosened, and becomes a faery isle, and after a brief vagrancy sinks almost without an eddy. Drowned!

Ophelia is the accepted type of the "bewildered maid" of song, of the bewildered maid who sings. Her ditties have inspired many a more or less conscious imitator. Her snatches of song have suggested many a more or less effective resemblance in prose fiction as well as verse. The songs of Bertha, in one of Miss Baillie's Plays on the Passions, are almost of Ophelia's setting—free, however, of all taint or stain or spot, or any such thing. In the fifth act, "enter Bertha, with a wild unsettled air, and her hair scattered upon her shoulders." The courtiers gather about her with curiosity. "How fair she is!" cries one. "Her eyes of lovely blue, Gentle, but restless. Dost thou see that glance?" And then they speak to the sweet songstress; but she gives them no reply for awhile.

"Dost thou not speak, thou who canst sing so well?

Who taught thee those sweet notes?

Bertha. The night was dark : I met spirits on my way ;
They sang me sweet songs, but they were sorrowful.
. . . When the moon's dark, I follow the night-bird's cry,
And it doth guide my way.—But he'll return,
So do they tell me, when sweet violets blow,
And summer comes again. . . . But softly,
Tell it to none again. They must not know
How stern he is, for he was gentle once."

Ophelia again recurs to us in reading what is said of Lilian in Lord Lytton's *Strange Story*,—that she would murmur snatches of songs, that were partly borrowed from English

Shakspeare to portray the masquerading of a princely gentleman, oppressed with sorrow, for the abject purpose of exhibiting himself, careless of distressing the object of his deepest affections."—*A Study of Hamlet.* By John Conolly, M.D.

poets, and partly glided away into what seemed spontaneous additions of her own—wanting intelligible meaning, but never melody or rhyme. “Strange, that memory and imitation—the two earliest parents of all inventive knowledge—should still be so active, and judgment—the after faculty that combines the rest into purpose and method—be annulled.” There is half-witted Fanny, too, in the same author’s *Night and Morning*, who confounded in meaning and motley disorder the various snatches of song she had learnt, weaving them together in some form which she understood, but which was jargon to all others; and often, as she went alone, through the green lanes or the bustling streets, the passenger would turn in pity and fear to hear her half chant, half murmur, ditties that seemed to suit only a wandering and unsettled imagination. Nor be forgotten Scott’s Madge Wildfire, whose snatches of song were often so pertinently impertinent, so pat and so embarrassing, and of whom Sir Walter expressly says, that of all the madwomen who have sung and said, since the days of Hamlet the Dane, if Ophelia be the most affecting, Madge Wildfire was the most provoking.

When Goethe’s travelled hero is asked for his thoughts about Ophelia, there is not much to be said about her, he replies, for her character is drawn by a few master-strokes: her whole existence flows in sweet and ripe sensation. “Her attachment to the Prince, to whose hand she may aspire, flows so spontaneously, her affectionate heart yields so completely to its impulse, that both her father and brother are afraid, and both give her plain and direct warning of her danger. Decorum, like the thin crape upon her bosom, cannot conceal the motions of her heart, but on the contrary it betrays them.” When she sees herself forsaken, rejected and despised, when everything is overturned in the soul of her distracted lover, and he offers her the bitter goblet of sorrow in place of the sweet cup of affection, then, “her heart breaks,” says Wilhelm Meister, “the entire edifice of her being is loosened from its hold, the death of her father is a fearful shock to it, and the whole structure collapses.” Very like Mr. Anthony Trollope, in its subacid sarcasm, is the

exclamation, "What hypocrites women are!" backed as that bill of indictment is, whether a true bill or not, by the alleged instance of Ophelia. Even Ophelia, he alleges, in her madness would pretend that she raved for her murdered father, when it was patent to all the world that she was mad for love of Hamlet.

Shakspeare's exquisite description of her mode of death may be said to pour cold water on all parallel passages—to give *them*, like her, a watery death. ("Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia!"—a vile conceit, by the way.) But we may recall, in passing, Procter's picture of Marcellia's watery grave, or rather of the underwoods and foliage which "the sad earth From its green bosom had cast out in pity, To mark a young girl's grave"—stretching their straggling arms across the rivulet, and so hiding "the poor Marcellia's death-bed." And again, the Zenobia of Hawthorne's Blithedale romance,—in so far at least as she deemed it well and decorous to die as so many village maidens have, wronged in their first love, and seeking peace in the bosom of the cool familiar stream, where in childhood they used to bathe their little feet.*

* Ophelia's death is pathetic, Professor Dowden remarks, but the pathos of Shakspeare, with characteristic discrimination he adds, is not the pretty pathos of Beaumont and Fletcher, a soft, a sweet and tender sorrow, a gentle investiture of melancholy: Shakspeare sees the fact from the Queen's point of view, and from Hamlet's; from the priest's and from the grave-digger's points of view; that is to say, he sees the fact in the round, and the pathos of Ophelia's death is in the drama as real as it would be if the occurrence became actual.—*Shakspeare: His Mind and Art*, p. 355.

CHAPTER IX.

Hamlet's Kinsfolk and Friends.

§ I.

THE GHOST.

EITHER John Banim, or his brother Michael—for the two between them seem to have made up the O'Hara family—alleged, in derision of stage ghosts all and sundry, Shakspeare's included, that since the first existence of the literary world, and throughout its entire range, it has only thrice been visited by your true legitimate spectre. One, he reckons, appeared to Eliphaz the comforter, in the land of Uz; the second, to the mad author of Ossian's poems; and the third is the Bodach Glas of the doomed Vich Ian Vohr. These he regards as fascinating and sublime because they are sketches only, loose and general as our own nursery ideas of what such beings are and ought to be. "In them person or materiality is not even indicated; they exist we know not how: they come and go, we know not whence or whither; they are and they are not." Christopher North was fond of fault-finding with Shakspeare in the matter of ghosts and witches; and the Ghost in *Hamlet* was freely and almost rudely handled by the old man with the crutch. True, he owned the first appearance of the royal spectre to be more than respectable—"it is solemn and impressive": the solitary reader's hair at midnight begins to bristle, his flesh to creep, his heart to quake, and he has hopes of a ghost that will curdle his blood, and make him ring the bell for the sight of a human face. "But when the old mole begins mining in the cellar, the gravity essential to the working of spiritual

influences begins to relax, and the reader waxes merry," etc. Prolivity, too, is a damaging count in the indictment—"intolerable prolivity" is Wilson's verdict on the Ghost's main speech; and, mindful of Oxford associations and experiences, he adds: "We have often felt, in reading it, for, prosy as it is, it has its felicitous expressions, (leperous distilment, and so forth,) that it is the model on which Cyril Jackson, the celebrated Dean of Christchurch, constructed his conversational discourse." Another Edinburgh Professor, of less extended fame, but of at least equal taste and judgment, commenting on the importance of an "artful" use of the supernatural, if the supernatural be introduced at all, declares everything to depend on the skill with which such machinery is used, the address of the preparation, and the tact with which the accessories and the background are selected. And then he asks, Who feels the slightest symptom of awe when the shade of Amphiaræus appears before the assembled people to forbid the banns between Eriphyle and Alcæon, or that of Ninus emerges in broad day from the tomb, in Voltaire's *Semiramis*? On the other hand, "Who does not,—at least in reading the play,—experience a pleasing thrill of fear, when, in the depth of a December night, with the sea moaning behind, and the bell then beating one, the majesty of buried Denmark advances with spectral stalk along the platform of Elsinore?" So again Prescott, the historian, asks who can equal Shakspeare in solemn mysterious imaginings, and affirms him to be the only modern poet who has succeeded in introducing the dim form of an apparition on the stage with any tolerable effect. "Yet Voltaire accuses him of mistaking the horrible for the terrible. When Voltaire had occasion to raise a ghost upon the French stage (a ticklish experiment), he made him so amiable in his aspect, that Queen Semiramis politely desires leave to 'throw herself at his feet, and to embrace them.'" The expression "horribly beautiful" is, however, vindicated as applicable to Hamlet's Ghost, and to him alone, by another Shakspearian critic, who lays stress on his being

such "a perfect gentleman," with "not one vulgar element about him;" and who is all admiration of the manner in which Shakspeare has caught the "true shape, form, and figure of a spiritual being, such as we at present conceive of it." The Ghost of the royal Dane is not a vague vapour; he is clad in complete steel: his beard is visible, "a sable silvered;" his beaver is up, his countenance is very pale, but more in sorrow than in anger; he has come from literal "fire," and his thoughts, feelings, and language resemble one of those still in the flesh. "And yet, around the steel and the beaver, and the beard, there hangs a haze of spiritual mystery and terror, which lends and receives effect from the materialism of the apparition. He vanishes at the crowing of the cock. He passes, like heat, through the solid ground." It is thus claimed for Shakspeare that he has avoided the extremes of representing a ghost in too shadowy or too gross a light—of spinning this unearthly thread too thick or too thin, too homespun or too gossamer. "His shadow is something of a substance, and his substance is something of a shade." Tieck was impatient of the monotonous recitation which is common in the part when acted; for although the dead Hamlet has no longer flesh and blood, he has all the human passions of anger, jealousy, and desire of revenge: even though modified, therefore, the pathos of the part must shine through—there must be anger in his words, and vehemence in his gestures.* No

* Another point of histrionic import upon which Tieck suggested an amendment, was that in the chamber scene between Hamlet and his mother, the ghost ought to appear, not in armour, as stage managers direct, but in his ordinary dress. Ghosts, like men, Tieck submitted, have a sense of propriety and fitness; the spirit appeared in arms upon the platform, among the armed guard, because in such garb it had been usually seen by them, but in the bedroom of the Queen he ought to appear in the dress most suited to the place, "in his habit as he lived."

Not that it made any difference to Gertrude, for she saw him not. Clad in complete steel, or loosely robed in nightgown, the apparition was to her non-apparent, and any change of costume would be lost upon Hamlet's widow.

Gertrude "perceives not the spirit," says Franz Horn, "for impurity

mere shadowy outline is he, of the sort indefinitely defined by Eliduke, in W. C. Roscoe's tragedy, where we read

"that the immortal soul,
Being dispossess'd, unthreads not all at once
Its mortal wrappings, but here lingering
On the half visible skirts of the Eternal,

can perceive nothing spiritual ; she believes, on the contrary, that her son's language is that of madness." Shakspeare may have had no more intention, however, of making the faculty of visionary vision in this case a matter of comparative morality, a privilege, or liability, or at any rate a condition, of the moral sense, than Sir Walter Scott had when, in the *Monastery*, he confined the visibility of the White Lady of Avenel to the elder of the Glendinning brothers, as they lay side by side on the same pallet—Halbert awaking Edward in a panic of terror, and asking if he saw no one in the room. "No, upon my good word," said Edward, looking out.—"What ! seest thou nothing in the moonshine upon the floor there?" "No, nothing," answered Edward, "save thyself, resting on thy naked sword. I tell thee, Halbert, thou shouldst trust more to thy spiritual arms, and less to those of steel and iron. For this many a night hast thou started and moaned, and cried out of fighting, and of spectres, and of goblins—thy sleep hath not refreshed thee—thy waking hath been a dream." Wherefore the more devoutly disposed Edward entreats Halbert to say the *Pater* and *Credo*, and resign himself to the protection of God,—promising that he shall then sleep sound and wake in comfort. "It may be," the other rejoins, his eye still bent on the female form which to him seems distinctly visible,—"it may be—But tell me, dear Edward, seest thou no one on the chamber floor but me?" "No one," answers Edward, raising himself on his elbow : "dear brother, lay aside thy weapon, say thy prayers, and lay thee down to rest." Then we are told how the Spirit smiled at Halbert as if in scorn, and how her wan cheek faded in the wan moonlight even before the smile had passed away, and Halbert himself no longer beheld the vision to which he had so anxiously solicited his brother's attention. "May God preserve my wits !" he said, as, putting aside his weapon, he again threw himself on the bed.—Scott's readers will perhaps recall, too, what is only on the surface a sort of parallel passage—the quasi-apparition of Anne of Geierstein to Arthur, while the Bernese Rudolph Donnerhugel sees nothing, and insists on his scared comrade seeing no more : nothing can come of nothing.

In Massinger's *Virgin Martyr* it appears that Angelo (Act iv., Sc. 3) is not meant to be seen or heard by any of the people present but Dorothea. "What object is her eye fixed on?" asks Antoninus. "I see nothing," replies Macrinus. This exclusive visibility is now the privilege of virtue and innocence, now the penalty of vice and crime. To see the Holy

Is caged in some fine links of earthly stain,
Making it to our grosser sense perceptible."

Straight from purgatory comes this panoplied apparition. The old sexton in *Castle Dangerous* instructs De Valence, that the spirits of the deceased Douglasses do not rest in their graves during the dishonour of their monuments, and

Grail, one must be a Christian ; the precious relic was invisible to the infidel. Only to Elisha the prophet, until he prayed that other eyes might be opened to see the same, was the mountain seen to be full of horses and chariots of fire round about him. Balaam could not see the angel that confronted him in the way, drawn sword in hand. The men which journeyed with Saul of Tarsus, when he was stricken to the ground by a light from heaven, stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. *He* saw a form they could not see ; though when he arose from the earth, and his eyes were opened, he too "saw no man ;" but this in another sense.

Mahomet alone could see the angel of God that haunted his chamber by night, and of whose divine mission he was at last persuaded by the wife, Chadijah, who was blessed, in that, seeing not, she yet believed.

When Cardinal Fesch importuned his nephew, the great Napoleon, not so far to quarrel with the Pope as to draw upon himself the enmity at once of heaven and earth, the Emperor took his uncle by the hand, led him to a window (it was night), and said, "Do you see that star?" "No, Sire." "Not see it? Look again. Look well." "Sire, I do not see it." "Well, *I* do."

The penal liability of guilt to a retributive exclusiveness of ghostly vision, is characteristically set forth in one of the Ingoldsby Legends,—that of the Dead Drummer :

"Cried Bill, whose short legs kept him still in the rear,
'Why, what's in the wind, Bo?—what is it you fear?'
For he saw in a moment that something was frightening:
His shipmate much more than the thunder and lightning.
'Fear?' stammer'd out Waters, 'why, *him*!—don't you see
What faces that Drummer-boy's making at me?
How he dodges me so, wherever I go?—
What is it he wants with me, Bill,—do you know?'
'What Drummer-boy, Harry?' cried Bill in surprise
(With a brief exclamation that ended in 'eyes,')
'What Drummer-boy, Waters?—the coast is all clear,
We haven't got never no Drummer-boy here.'
'Why, there!—don't you see how he's following me?
Now this way, now that way, and won't let me be!
Keep him off, Bill—look here—don't let him come near!
Only see how the blood-drops his features besmear!
What, the dead come to life again!—Bless me!—Oh dear!'
Bill remarked in reply, 'This is all very queer—

the downfall of their house. "That, upon death, the greater part of any line are consigned to the regions of eternal bliss, or of never-ending misery, religion will not suffer us to believe, and amidst a race who had so great a share of worldly triumph and prosperity, we must suppose there have existed many who have been justly subjected to the doom of an intermediate space of punishment." Can the English spoiler of their temples marvel that the tormented spirits, deprived of the relief which had been proposed to them, should not, in the common phrase, rest in their graves? Can the younger Hamlet, when he shall know all, wonder that his dead sire revisits thus the glimpses of the moon, making night hideous? From purgatorial fires he returns for his brief allotted space, like the Shade of Polydorus, whose self-announced advent opens the *Hecuba* of Euripides,—the very first line of which asserts his arrival from the darksome gates of death :

Ἦκω, νεκρῶν κευθῶμα καὶ σκότου πύλας
 Λιπῶν, ἔν' Ἀδης χωρὶς ὄκισται θεῶν.

Philarète Chasles pays a special tribute of admiration to Shakspeare for the art with which, while encompassing with dim mystery the supernatural beings he puts upon the stage, he never makes use of them as merely passive agents,

What, a Drummer-boy—bloody too, eh!—well, I never—
 I can't see no Drummer-boy here whatsumdever !'
 ' Not see him !—why there ;—look !—he's close by the post—
 Hark !—hark !—how he drums at me now !—he's a Ghost !' "

Lest any one should fancy that the appearance of the Ghost in the Queen's closet is a pure imagination of Hamlet, though that on the platform (seen by others as plainly as by the Prince himself) was real, Mr. Boaden is at pains to show that this exclusive visibility was an acknowledged property of spirits. He quotes Prospero's commission to Ariel :

" Be subject to no sight but thine and mine,
 Invisible to every eyeball else."

And the critic takes occasion to deprecate the notion, of a similar kind, that "once banished the spirit of Banquo from the banquet." "I think I have heard of an attempt to deny the parallelism of Banquo's spirit with the shade of Denmark, because the latter *speaks*, in addition to the gestures they have in common." But surely, urges the biographer of the Kembles, speech may be fancied as well as appearance. As to Banquo,

mere secondary and convenient contrivances to serve a turn. Most authors, when they lay hold of the sceptre of magic, are apt, the French critic complains, to claim for themselves an unfettered exercise of the extravagant and the right to abuse an unlimited power. For them, a ghost, a spectre, an apparition, are but property-man's effects charged with the duty of amusing or exciting an audience by some unexpected fright—*par des épouvantements imprévus*. But in Shakspeare, from the moment the supernatural world is brought to bear upon the scene, it is with a view to dominate over suffering mortals, and to hover over the entire play, a felt presence which is not to be put by. To English critics it seems hard that the Ghost in *Hamlet* should be subjected to a Rationalist inspection in German philosophy; but this has been done by Dr. Schlipper, of Münster, whose elucidation of the play* has won, however, the praise of a Saturday Reviewer for its display of thoughtfulness and sagacity, while it vindicates the national character for ingenuity by suggesting that Shakspeare did not mean that Hamlet really saw a ghost, but only that he entertained a strong moral conviction upon the subject of his father's death, which conviction Shakspeare, in a *recht dichterisch-theatralisch* manner, puts into the form of a ghost.†

it is Mr. Charles Knight's conviction that, had it not been for the necessities of a theatrical representation, Shakspeare would never have allowed it to be supposed that a visible ghost was in presence at the banquet scene: to Macbeth alone, who saw the dagger, and heard the voices cry "sleep no more," are the spectral appearances of that "solemn supper" visible. Are they not then, it is plausibly asked, the forms only of his imagination? The partner of his guilt sees no spectre, because her obdurate will cannot coexist with the imagination which produces the terror and remorse of her husband. It is scarcely, in this critic's judgment, what Mrs. Jameson calls the "towering bravery of her mind," but something lower than courage—the absence of impressibility. But her turn comes, when sleep forsakes her, or rather when she takes to walking (and talking) in her sleep.

* Shakspeare's Hamlet, von Dr. L. Schlipper. Münster, 1862.

† At Versailles, in 1814, Haydon and Wilkie saw Talma in the *Hamlet* traduced by Ducis, where the Ghost is not seen. Haydon writes, "But

Addison said there was nothing which at once so much delighted and terrified our English theatre as a ghost, "especially when he appears in a bloody shirt." A spectre has very often saved a play, the Spectator asserts,—though doing nothing but stalking across the stage, or rising through a cleft of it, and sinking again without speaking one word. There may be a proper season for these several terrors, the author of *Cato* goes on to say; and when they come in as aids to the poet, they are not only to be excused, but to be applauded. "The appearance of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is a masterpiece in its kind, and wrought up with all the circumstances that can create either attention or horror. The mind of the reader is wonderfully prepared for his reception by the discourses that precede it; his dumb behaviour at his first entrance strikes the imagination very strongly; but every time he enters, he is still more terrifying. Who can read the speech with which young Hamlet accosts him without trembling?" To Christopher North's expression of something like regret that Mrs. Radcliffe never introduced into her stories any real ghosts, the Ettrick Shepherd demurred, and for the demur showed cause. If you introduce a real ghost at all, he argued, it should appear but seldom, and never but on some great or dread account—"as the Ghost of Hamlet's father." Then the extreme difficulty of making it speak "with a tomb voice." At the close of the tale, the mind would be shocked unless the dead had burst its cerements for some end which the dead alone could have accomplished—unless the catastrophe were worthy an Apparition. How few events, and how few actors, would, as the story shuts itself up, be felt to have been of such surpassing moment as to have deserved the very laws of nature to have been changed for their sakes, and shadows brought from the darkness of burial-places, that seem to our imaginations locked up from all communion with the breathing world. "In highest tragedy, a Spirit may be among the

when Hamlet was talking to his mother, and fancied for a moment he saw his father's ghost, Talma was terrific;—it really shook my orthodoxy. The Ghost was not seen;—and his talking as if he only saw what we did not, frightened us all."—*Autobiography of B. R. Haydon*, vol. i., p. 266.

dramatis personæ—for the events come all on processionally, and under a feeling of fate. There, too, you *see* the ghost ; and indifferently personated though it may be, the general hush proves that religion is the deepest principle of our nature, and that even the vain shows of a theatre can be sublimed by an awe-struck sadness, when, revisiting the glimpses of the moon, and making night hideous, comes gliding in and away, in cold unringing armour, or unsubstantial vapour, a being whose eyes once saw the cheerful sunlight, and whose footsteps once brought out echoes from the flowery earth.” Entirely in concord with this Ambrosian argument throughout, are some remarks by Leigh Hunt in an early number of the *Indicator*. A ghost story, to be a good one, should, he there contends, unite as much as possible objects such as they are in life with a preternatural spirit ; and to be a perfect one, some great sentiment should be implied—something that comes out of the next world to remind us of our duties in this ; or something that helps to carry on the idea of our humanity into after-life, even when we least think we shall take it with us. When “the buried majesty of Denmark” revisits earth to speak to his son Hamlet, he comes armed, as he used to be, in his complete steel.* His visor is raised, and the same fine face is there ; only, in spite of his penal errand and his own sufferings, with “a countenance more in sorrow than in anger.” Dr. Conolly

* Mr. Boaden observes that the reason for Shakspeare’s dressing the Ghost in armour has never been assigned, unless on account of the picturesque effect derived from it. “Yet it has a very marked and striking propriety, when well considered.” The usual regal dress, we are reminded, would have had nothing in it to alarm ; the “habit of interment” would have been horrible, or loathsome, or ridiculous ; and Shakspeare’s object seems to have been to excite the strongest attention, and yet not betray the real and ultimate cause of his appearance. Mr. Boaden takes pains to show, accordingly, that Fortinbras of Norway had dared the late king to single combat, and had forfeited his lands with his life ; to recover which lands, young Fortinbras has levied soldiers, and has thereby caused Denmark to make great preparations for war. Might not the Danes fear, with some reason, that what their late hero had won, might be lost by his degenerate brother ? The appearance of the Ghost is conceived, therefore, to relate entirely to the approaching war—for he

has been thought to have not sufficiently insisted* upon the wholesome restraint which the elder Hamlet must have exercised on his son—a restraint of which he became distinctly conscious only when it was removed for ever. With wondrous art, urges a psychological critic, has Shakspeare disclosed to us the character of the father through the words of the son : an inferior dramatist would have told us in direct terms what manner of man the buried majesty of Denmark was,—Shakspeare makes us feel what he had been to his son, his queen, his courtiers, and his friends. And from his son's expressions of love and respect for him, the inference is drawn, that the one stay on which young Hamlet had rested, the one barrier between mental sanity and incipient or complete disease of the wit, was broken and removed by the elder Hamlet's death. "He was, if we may estimate his character from what his son and Horatio impart, a man of great sobriety of mind and of much vigour in action—a man, like Tennyson's King Arthur, to be feared as well as loved—one fitted to bear a kingdom's weight, a bright example of household governance, grave, true, and yet tender." Under such guidance, it is argued, the very dissimilar character of the son was kept under wholesome restraint, and yet its strong affections were not nipped in the bud. "To such a son, in whom the *théorique* in life far outweighed the *pratique*, such a father was a pole-star, and when its light was withdrawn, suddenly and for ever, the chart and rudder of the son's after-life were rendered nearly unserviceable." Remember *thee*, king, father, royal Dane?

"Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe."

is observed to wear even the very armour he had on when he combated ambitious Norway.

"Well may it sort, that this portentous figure]
Comes armed through our watch, so like the king,
That was, and is, the question of these wars."

The dress, on Mr. Boaden's showing, was thus calculated to point solely to the existing or probable circumstances of the country ; and kept even from suspicion the nature of the disclosure that was intended for Hamlet.

* In his *Study of Hamlet*. 1863.

§ II.

CLAUDIUS AND GERTRUDE.

EXCEPTION was justly taken to Retzch's portraiture of Claudius, in the orchard murder scene, as "an ugly heathen," not indeed too bad a villain, but too low a scoundrel; one who could not be the brother of a king, and who could seduce no woman who was not degraded below all degradation, (and the mother of Hamlet is still a queen). Downright physically disgusting, one critic calls him, as though Retzch had embodied the grossest issues of Hamlet's hatred,—combining in a human form the various deformities of a satyr, a drunkard, a paddock, a bat, a gib, a slave. "His vile low forehead, whalley eyes, pendulous cheeks, and filthy he-goatish beard—foh! the nobles of Denmark would never have compounded felony with such a 'cutpurse of the empire.'" When the Shepherd in the *Noctes* assures North that he will find Shakspeare's Claudius to be really such a monster, and meets a negative with the rejoinder, "But Hamlet says so,"—"No matter what Hamlet says," is Christopher's rough and ready reply; "Hamlet utters his own sentiments, not Shakspeare's—and hatred is twenty-fold blinder than love." There is valid evidence to warrant Hartley Coleridge's contention that Claudius, sensualist, adulterer, fratricide, and usurper as he is, yet has royal blood in his veins, and, for an usurper, plays the King's part rarely: even the Ghost ascribes to him "witchcraft of wit;" and accordingly he is a fine talker, a florid rhetorical speaker, not unfurnished with commonplaces of morality, and thoroughly capable of sustaining his assumed dignity. "His reproof of Hamlet's perseverent woe would have done credit to a better man." When his conscience will let him, he lacks not courage. Shakspeare, in short, was aware, and here Retzch seemed to have forgotten, that great moral guilt may coexist with much personal or official dignity, and even with "acute intellectual perceptions of right and wrong." Tieck went far in the reaction against the criticism which had made a mere and sheer sorry villain of

Claudius. This king, said he, sprung from a family of heroes, has many great and excellent qualities, outweighed though doubtless these are by many bad and base ones : throughout he is kingly and dignified ; he can be guilty of wicked and ruthless deeds, but he cannot appear insignificant ; treachery is his nature ; his very being is made up of equivocation and perjury ; yet all these revolting qualities he clothes with an air of nobleness and amiability. "He is strong and large of stature, but handsome ;* even the Ghost describes him as in the highest degree seductive ; and Hamlet, though behind his back he paints him as every way mean and detestable, yet feels himself always rebuked and confused in his presence, and cannot make good before his opponent the high-sounding terms of which he is so liberal when alone." In Tieck's judgment, neither is the usurper so contemptible, nor the murdered monarch so excellent, as the prince under the influence of passion represents them in the awful scene with his mother.

At the first appearance of Claudius, we see in him "all the dignity of a king ;" his address is pointed, his bearing noble ; he despatches business and ceremony with tact, decision, and skill. What though he be too ready to improve every occasion by a revel, and be, as Tieck pronounces him, "a drinker, a debauchee, immoderate in all his pleasures,"—so too, this critic intimates, had the elder Hamlet been, whose Ghost complains of having been cut off even in the blossoms of his sin.† On the other hand, the German critic's English critics have contended, that of Hamlet's father, anything either

* "Tieck is singularly at issue with Horn, and we suspect with the whole world beside, in his estimate of Claudius," observed Professor G. Moir—who also takes Tieck to have been at issue with himself.

† Even so, by a fiendish refinement of malice, would Hamlet—so he tries or offers to persuade himself—cut off Claudius himself in his turn. Execrated as atrocious is the scene where Hamlet enters and finds his uncle praying, and therefore will not take his life at that instant, which might tell in favour of the victim, but will rather choose a moment when he is flushed with riot, when the senses are swamping the spirit, and the bestial part of him overrides the human. "Now might I do it, pat, now he is praying, . . . and so he goes to heaven, and so am I revenged."

hinted or expressed, gives the highest idea ; his heroism, his nobleness of character, his affection for the Queen, his perfect union of the majestic and the amiable, are not to be mistaken ; whereas in the treacherous murderer who succeeds him, what one quality, they ask,—not indeed to engage our love, but to mitigate our dislike and contempt—can be found ? Where are the “great and excellent” qualities that his apologist ascribes to him ? Are such consistent with the moral conception of a being whose whole existence is admitted to

But *is* that revenge, on second thoughts,—is it full revenge, the crime and the manner of the crime considered ?

“ He took my father grossly, full of bread ;
 With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May ;
 And how his audit stands, who knows, save heaven ?
 But, in our circumstance and course of thought,
 ’Tis heavy with him : and am I then revenged,
 To take him in the purging of his soul,
 When he is fit and season’d for his passage ?
 No.
 Up, sword ; and know thou a more horrid hent ;
 When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage, . . .
 At gaming, swearing ; or about some act
 That has no relish of salvation in’t :
 Then trip him,”

that his way to perdition may be short, direct, and sure ; and his perdition itself be complete.

Intelligibly, if not excusably enough, this scene is altogether omitted on the stage. Mr. R. Grant White is intolerant of the omission : “ What an outrageous liberty ! how injurious to the intent of the author ! ” And Shakspeare’s Scholar has good cause to show for his protest. He argues much as Coleridge argued in the matter. Hamlet is a man of contemplation, who is ever diverted from his purposed deeds by speculation upon their probable consequences or their past causes, unless he acts too quickly and under too much excitement for any reflection to present itself—as in the last scenes of the third act and the fifth. In the present instance he finds the King alone, and in a situation that seems to tempt revenge. He instantly determines on the deed, half draws his sword, steps forward—but the idea suggests itself “and so he goes to heaven ;” and in a moment the avenger of blood is converted into the moral philosopher ; he discovers that such a death would be no expiation, and gladly seizes this excuse for procrastinating the execution of his task. “ By the omission of this scene, Hamlet’s character is not developed according to the author’s intent ; which is an offence unpardonable.” To touch a line which portrays character, because it is

consist in treachery, equivocation, and perjury?*" In the course of one of his congenial colloquies with Charles Lamb on Shakspearian topics, Mr. Crabb Robinson took occasion to object to Coleridge's assertion that Shakspeare, as it were, identified himself with everything except the vicious,—the objector urging that if Shakspeare's "becoming" a character is to be determined by the truth and vivacity of his delineation, he had "become" some of the vicious characters as well as the virtuous. Lamb hereupon essayed to justify Coleridge's remark, by saying that Shakspeare never gives characters wholly odious and detestable. "I adduced the King in *Hamlet* as altogether mean; and he allowed this to be the worst of Shakspeare's characters. There is not another like it." Dr. Maginn, on the other hand, expressly cites this

thought superfluous or inconsistent by commentators or stage-managers, is, to Shakspeare's Scholar, much as if a man who liked aquiline features should knock off the nose of the Apollo Belvedere, and say, "It's a small matter, only a nose; the face is a face without it; and besides, I would have made it a Roman if I had made the statue." Wise above what is written, will they never, groans the remonstrant, learn that they did *not* make the Apollo, nor Hamlet, Romeo, or Lear?

To Dr. Johnson's denunciation of the sentiment of Hamlet in this scene, as atrocious and horrible, so as to be unfit to be put into the mouth of a human being, S. T. Coleridge replied that Johnson did not understand the character of Hamlet, and censured accordingly: the determination to allow the guilty King to escape at such a moment is only part of the indecision and irresoluteness of the Prince. "Hamlet seizes hold of a pretext for not acting, when he might have acted so instantly and effectually: therefore he again defers the revenge he was bound to seek, and declares his determination to accomplish it at some" more convenient season, more damaging and literally more damning to the doomed monarch. "This was merely the excuse Hamlet made to himself for not taking advantage of this particular and favourable moment for doing justice upon his guilty uncle, at the urgent instance of the spirit of his father." The incident is taken special note of by Coleridge as illustrating his view of the character of Hamlet—a man living in meditation, called upon to act by every motive human and divine, but the great object of whose life is defeated by his continually resolving to do, yet doing nothing but resolve.

* "Every other critic had, as in duty bound, abused Claudius. Tieck, therefore, it seems, must defend him; but really the defence seems either to contain its own refutation, or is based on so slender a foundation,

"worst of Shakspeare's characters," in favour of his proposition that about the worst of them there is always some redeeming point. "Claudius is fond of his foully-won queen, and exhibits at least remorse for his deed in heartrending soliloquies." He can repent, and he can pray; and is the man wholly lost who not only is capable of, but who practises, repentance and prayer?

Of Queen Gertrude's marriage with her brother-in-law, the same critic observes, that it does not appear that she had dishonoured herself in the life of her first husband, or was in any manner participant in the crime of Claudius: Hamlet never, even in the vehemence of his anger, insinuates such a charge; and the Ghost, rising to moderate his violence, acquits her by his very appearance at such a time, of any heinous degree of guilt.

Hazlitt, and others, treat her as "criminal." Referring to her beautiful apostrophe to Ophelia on throwing flowers into the grave, "Sweets to the sweet, farewell," etc., Hazlitt pauses to admire Shakspeare's thorough mastery of the mixed motives of human character, in that, for instance, he here shows us the Queen, who "was so criminal in some respects," not without sensibility and affection in other relations of life.

In support of his argument that Shakspeare ever represented with rarest delicacy his female characters, no other dramatic author rivalling him in so successfully distinguishing the sexes, "*deux natures morales que jamais il n'a pu confondre*," M. de Barante cites Gertrude and Ophelia as, each in her own way, *les rôles les plus touchants*; and especially in Gertrude does he claim to see a truthful and natural combination of opposite feelings. He regards her as having consented to crime and shame, from feminine weakness; and afterwards as defenceless against remorse as she had been against seduction. He particularly notes in the Queen a thoroughly maternal love for her son, with a kind of reverence for him as the real head of the family. Of Hamlet's

that we cannot but wonder that such a theory should have been adopted, or at least that, if adopted, it should not have been better defended."—*Shakspeare in Germany*, Part I.

feeling towards her, equally affectionate, the great German actor Emil Devrient was studious to give ocular demonstration which won the applause of London playgoers, Professor H. Morley included—expressing finely, they agreed, with his cloak thrown over his face, the climax of his horror when instructed by his father's ghost of her part in the crime;—his subsequent acting frequently conveying the impression that this crime of his mother had spread a blot over his faith in the whole world;* while, in the scene with Gertrude after the play, his passion was mingled with affection; and, after his father's ghost had vanished from the chamber, his words to her were all spoken with endearments and embraces. There was little of the tone of Electra :

τῇ ταλαίνῃ μητρί· μητέρ' εἰ χρεῶν
Τάντην προσαυδᾷν τῷδε συγκοιμωμένην.

Worse than being cheated of his inheritance, worse than the dark misgivings which had been flitting across his mind and casting shadows of suspicion too dreadful for him to give utterance to,—“worse than all this,” in Mr. Henry Reed's reckoning, is Hamlet's “anguish of disappointment in his once-loved mother, the once ‘most seeming virtuous queen.’” Memories of his father's deep and honourable love to her crowd upon the soul of their son; and unable and unwilling to cast away his duty, and perhaps affection, to her, Hamlet is “agitated by the reluctant conviction that she is unworthy of it;” and thus the sentiment of filial piety, which ought to flow in a placid current, is changed into a broken and fretted tide. Thackeray once remarked, with characteristic sarcasm on the sex, that no invectives can be more rude, gross, and unphilosophical, than Hamlet's to his mother about her second marriage; and he surmised the simple truth of the matter to be, that that “tender, parasitic creature wanted a something to cling to,” and, Hamlet senior out of the way, twined herself round Claudius.

* “Sa mère est coupable, et il doute de tout. La croyance au bien est déracinée dans son âme : il aimait avec passion la jeune Ophélie ; il rejette et brise cet amour si pure. Tout se décolore et se flétrit.”—Philarète Chasles : *Etudes sur le Drame Espagnol*, § xi.

Professor Dowden takes Gertrude to be soft and sensual, a lover of ease, a little sentimental withal, and therefore incapable of genuine passion; one who for thirty years had given the appearance, the *simulacrum* of true love to her husband, without reality or root in her being. "The timid, self-indulgent, sensuous, sentimental queen is as far remote from true woman's virtue as Claudius is from the virtues of royal manhood." Claudius is characterized by the same critic as the appearance of a king; under which kingly appearance is hidden a wretched, corrupt, and cowardly soul; a poisoner of the true king and of true kingship, incestuous, gross, and wanton, a fierce drinker, a palterer with his conscience, and as Hamlet vehemently urging the fact describes him, "a vice of kings," "a villain and a cutpurse," "a paddock, a bat, a gib." When such is kingship in Denmark, well may the phrase of Marcellus about something being rotten in the state, be improved by the amendment that all is rotten—the whole head sick and the whole heart faint.

Macready in one of his letters avowed himself at a loss to imagine how one of his correspondents, an earnest and inquiring fellow-student of Shakspeare, could have become possessed of the idea that Gertrude was "a participator in the murder of Hamlet."* He urges that the random words in that moment of maddening excitement are not meant to couple the two acts of murder and marriage as crimes of the Queen. "The furious intimation of his father's fate is

* How did the French Academician, Ducis, in remodelling the English tragedy for French uses, manage matters? According to him, the Queen had placed a cup of poison, prepared by Claudius, beside the bed of her husband, the elder Hamlet, and then rushed out of the room. Seized by remorse, she hurried back in order to dash the cup to pieces, but unfortunately it was too late, for the King meanwhile had taken the poison, and was already dead. Claudius, it seems, had been her first love; but for state considerations she had consented to marry the King. As a widow, she has completely succumbed to her pangs of conscience, and penitently acknowledges her guilt to her confidant, Elvire, apparently for no other reason than to confess. Dr. Karl Elze makes the judicious remark that Shakspeare has spread a veil over Gertrude's guilt, which Ducis, with an unwise and unpoetic hand, has rent asunder.

one of those evidences of penetration into the human heart, on which one cannot reason ; one can only feel that Shakespeare's genius is above all laws of art. The words are inconsequent, they are unjustifiable, but they are what Hamlet would have said, and it would be a reasonable argument that, under similar circumstances, they must have been said, such actual truth of feeling is in their opposition to the truth of fact. . . . He, Hamlet, moreover, would not load his uncle with all those terms of obloquy and vituperation, if his mother had merited her share of them." Had it been given to Gertrude to see what Hamlet saw,—*whom* Hamlet saw,—and to hear all that Hamlet had heard ; haply the effect upon her might have been such as another poet pictures of another Queen, when,

"prone from off her seat she fell,
And grovell'd with her face against the floor :
There with her milk-white arms and shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from the King :
And in the darkness heard his armed feet
Pause by her ; then came silence, then a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed the King's."

§ III.

HORATIO.

THAT Hamlet needed such an outward monitor and guide as he lost in his majestic father, has been inferred from his choice of the calm, cheerful, and independent Horatio for his friend and confidant : they are, in all respects, except common love and reverence, the opposites of each other. Inferior to his princely friend in intellect, observes one critic, Horatio is superior to him in will. "He cannot, indeed, supply the void which death has made, but he can at least serve as an occasional prop to the vacillating temper of Hamlet. He is no broken reed like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ; no hope of

preferment will turn Horatio into a tool of Claudius or a flatterer of Gertrude." Another commentator on the friendship of Hamlet and Horatio speaks of them as resembling each other in moral purity and manliness of character, while, as regards intellectual constitution and habits of feeling, it is scarcely possible for two men to be more unlike: Hamlet, full of philosophy, of poetry, meditative, sensitive to the highest degree, the equipoise of his nature disturbed by what befalls him; Horatio, without "a particle of the poetical* or philosophical constitution or temperament," one of the most matter-of-fact persons conceivable, with strong and genuine feelings, but with those feelings imperturbably adjusted and balanced; and it is exactly in this particular that he is pronounced to be the appropriate friend of Hamlet, as Hamlet himself feels. "He takes Horatio as his chosen friend, because he finds in his sober-minded judicious character something that makes up for his own infirmity of over-sensitiveness." Horatio, says Professor Reed, is a man not only of strong, but just and well-regulated, feelings, and especially in intellectual constitution, possessed of sound, practical common sense, strikingly contrasted with Hamlet's imaginative apprehensiveness—his deep spirit of meditation and overwrought mental activity. Coleridge remarks that Bernardo's inquiry after Horatio, and the repetition of his name and in his own presence, indicate a respect or an eagerness that implies him as one of the persons who are in the foreground; while the scepticism attributed to him,—

"Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,"—

prepares us for Hamlet's after eulogy on him as one whose blood and judgment were happily commingled.†

In various parts of his treatise on the Mind and Art of

* But are his speeches in the very first scene of the play so void of the poetical as all that?

† "The actor should also be careful to distinguish the expectation and gladness of Bernardo's 'Welcome, Horatio!' from the mere courtesy of his 'Welcome, good Marcellus!'"—*Notes and Lectures on Shakspeare*, by S. T. Coleridge, vol. i., p. 213.

Shakspeare, Professor Dowden glances at the distinctive character of Horatio, whom he finds noteworthy for grave strength, self-government, and well-balanced faculties. A strong nature being what Hamlet needed, all the comfort he ever got in life is ascribed to one who was "more an antique Roman than a Dane;" and the conclusion is drawn that if Hamlet had found one who to Horatio's fortitude, his passive strength, had added ardour and enthusiasm, the prince's melancholy must have vanished away; he would have been lifted up into the light and strength of the good facts of the world, and then he could not have faltered upon his line of action. Attention is called to the touching devotion shown by Hamlet to Horatio in the meeting which follows the scene in the lobby with Ophelia; a devotion which is the overflow of gratitude for the comfort and refuge he finds with his friend after the recent proof of the incapacity and want of integrity in the woman he had loved. "Horatio's equanimity, his evenness of temper, is like solid land to Hamlet after the tossings and tumult of his own heart." Does the prince seem to flatter his friend? It is not flattery; it is genuine delight in the sanity, the strength, the constancy of Horatio's character.*

"Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man
As e'er my conversation coped withal.

* * * * *

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish her election,
She hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Has ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man

* "Yet all the while Shakspeare compels us to feel that it is Hamlet with his manifold weakness, and ill-commingled blood and judgment, who is the rarer nature of the two; and that Horatio is made to be his helpmate, recognizing in service his highest duty."—Dowden, *Shakspeare: His Mind and Art*, p. 154.

That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee."

In Horatio, his royal fellow-student at Wittenberg was eager to hail a modern representative of the time-honoured philosophy, "*Æquam memento rebus in arduis Servare mentem, non secus in bonis,*" etc.; and one whose treatment and whose estimate of that fickle jade, Fortune, was true to the classical type: *laudo manentem*, but with entire readiness to resign her gifts at the first flutter of her fleet and fleeting wings. With good Kent in the stocks he would say, "A good man's fortune may grow out at heels," and with Kent, in that case, he would take to whistling. With Shakspeare's Pompey would he say; when told of a change apparent in his looks,

"Well, I know not
 What counts harsh fortune casts upon my face;
 But in my bosom shall she never come,
 To make my heart her vassal."

Or again, with Shakspeare's Antony, in his worthier mood, and when his better self:

"Do not please sharp fate
 To grace it with your sorrows: bid that welcome
 Which comes to punish us, and we punish it
 Seeming to bear it lightly."

But there was nothing about fortune-defying Horatio of that hireling of Macbeth's, whom the vile blows and buffets of the world had so incensed, that he was reckless what he did, to spite the world; or of that other, his well-mated fellow, so "tugged with fortune" that he would set his life on any chance to mend it, or to end it. *Quod sors feret, feremus æquo animo*, he would be for saying with Terence; nor would he have been disinclined to hold with Syrus, that Fortune makes a fool of the man she favours over-much: *Fortuna nimium quem fovet, stultum facit*. In apostolic phrase, he knew both how to be abased, and how to abound. It is the boast of Ulysses and his comrades in toil and travel, that they ever with a frolic welcome took the thunder and the sunshine, and opposed free hearts, free foreheads. So with Jean Paul's

Quintus Fixlein, who, "when Fortune made a wry face at him, was wont, like children in their sport at one another, to laugh at her so long till she herself was obliged to begin smiling." The hero of the laureate's *Princess* claims to have been (at least at one time) one

"To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise."

What Carlyle admires in Jean Paul himself is the "high, cheerful stoicism" that grew up in him: poverty, pain, and all evil he learned to regard, not as what they seemed, but as what they are: he "learned to despise them, nay in kind mockery to sport with them, as with bright spotted wild beasts which he had tamed and harnessed." Sorely pressed on from without, he stood like a rock amid the beating of continual tempests—"a rock crowned with foliage, and in its clefts nourishing flowers of sweetest perfume." Come of it what might, he determined to try issues to the uttermost with Fortune—and even, while fighting like a very Ajax against her, to keep laughing in her face till she too ceased to frown. He went far to realize Ben Jonson's wish for his fast friend Master Colby,

"That Fortune never make thee to complain,
But what she gives, thou dar'st give her again,—
That whatsoever fate thy fate puts on,
Thou shrink or start not, but be always one."

A calm temper, says Adam Smith, which does not allow its tranquillity to be disturbed, either by the small injuries or by the little disasters incident to the usual course of human affairs, but which, amidst the natural and moral evils infesting the world, lays its account, and is contented to suffer a little from both, is a blessing to the man himself, and gives ease and security to all his companions. The faulty excess of such a temperament is perhaps exemplified in the characters in *Gil Blas*; of whom it has been said, that the simplicity with which they put up with what they cannot help, or suppose themselves to be unable to help, resembles

nothing so much as the acquiescence of boys at a great public school in rules of the school which are neither reasonable nor pleasant. It is with types of quite another sort that Mr. Carlyle loves to deal : a Frederick the Great when "like to be overwhelmed"—drenched in misery, but used to his black element, unaffectedly defiant of it, or not at the pains to defy it ; occupied only to do his very utmost in it, with or without success, till the end come.* Or again, a

* In his meditated suicide he may remind us of Horatio's bit of self-assertion, "I am more an antique Roman than a Dane"—for it is with the design and resolve of instant suicide, in order not to survive Hamlet, that Horatio thus expresses himself. Hamlet has enjoined him, as survivor, to report his cause aright to the unsatisfied ; but Horatio exclaims, "Never believe it,"—and, seizing the poisoned cup, "Here's yet some liquor left,"—which the dying prince, however, forces him to leave as it is. "Give me the cup : let go ; by Heaven, I'll have it,"—and Horatio is baffled.

The Marius of Landor's imaginary conversation tells how the Numanian trumpeter cried, "There is yet room, and there is strength enough yet, both in the element and in me," as he tottered into the civic fire. A closer parallel to Horatio is Libanius, when assured of the death of Julian. At once he cast his eye on his sword ; but, adds Gibbon, "he recollected Plato had condemned suicide, and that he must live to compose the panegyric of Julian." He must forego the antique Roman, and live and labour to report the emperor and his cause aright, to the unsatisfied.

When Sybil Dacy, in Hawthorne's romance of immortality, after drinking of that strange draught which ought to have been vitalizing elixir, but which is potent poison, dashed the goblet to the ground, "Why hast thou spilt the drink?" said Septimius, bending his dark brows upon her, and frowning over her ; "we might have died together." "No ; live, Septimius," said the girl, whose face appeared to grow bright and joyous, as if the drink of death exhilarated her like an intoxicating fluid. "I would not let you have it, not one drop." No-way resembling her is the woman in *Armada* who "noticed the Purple Flask," and said quietly, "Ah, I had forgotten my best friend—I had forgotten that there is more to pour in yet,"—and poured accordingly, with a steady hand, and calm, attentive face. Another feminine example is Adrienne, who will and does drain the fatal draught of Djalma, in *Le Juif errant*.

Brackenbush, in Goethe's *Egmont*, is importunate for a share in Clara's phial. "Let me then die with thee ! Share it ! oh share it ! There is enough to extinguish two lives." But Clara as explicitly forbids him to "partake," (as the penny-a-liners in poisoning paragraphs invariably word

Scott, that "right brave and strong man, according to his kind," who quietly bore along with him such a load of toil, such a measure of felicity ; who with such quiet strength both "worked on this earth, and enjoyed in it ; invincible to evil fortune and to good. A most composed invincible man : in difficulty and distress knowing no discouragement," but, Samson-like, carrying off on his strong Samson-shoulders the gates that would imprison him ; in danger and menace laughing at the whisper of fear. "Quem res plus nimio delectavere secundæ, Mutatæ quatient,"—but such was not Sir Walter. Xenophon accounted it a more difficult thing to find one who bears prosperity well than one who bears disaster well—τ' αγαθὰ καλῶς φέροντα, ἢ τὰ κακά— but Scott was equal to either fortune. As Hamlet admired this equanimity in Horatio, so Pope in blameless Bethel :

" His equal mind I copy what I can,
And, as I love, would imitate the man.
In South-Sea days not happier when surmised
The lord of thousands, than if now excised ;
In forest planted by a father's hand,
Than in five acres now of rented land."

There is one of Mr. Trollope's characters of whom a close student of character has this to say : "No trouble or sorrow would, I think, crush him. But had prosperity come to him, it would have made him odious to all around him." If it should please the gods, writes the author of the *Virginians*, "to try me with ten thousand a year, I will, of course, meekly submit myself to their decrees, but I will pray them to give me strength enough to bear the trial." A weak mind sinks under prosperity, as well as under adver-

it,) as Romeo implicitly had forbidden Juliet. "Here's yet some liquor left," could Horatio say, of Hamlet's leavings. But for Juliet there were no leavings :

" What's here ? a cup, closed in my true love's hand ?
Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end :—
O churl ! drink all ; and leave no friendly drop
To help me after ?—I will kiss thy lips ;
Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,
To make me die with a restorative."

sity, said Julius Hare: "a strong and deep mind has two highest tides—when the moon is at the full, and when there is no moon." Shenstone compares to the oak that displays not its verdure on the sun's first approach, nor drops it on his first departure, the brave man who is not suddenly either elated by prosperity or depressed by adversity. The moral of Arlington's life, as Mr. Lister tells it on the last page, is that of a man who had learnt to observe the "golden mean" of tempered hope and rational pursuit, by which we are rendered less accessible to calamity and best prepared for its reception. "To avoid occasions, and to be above accidents, is one of the greatest masteries of man," wrote Owen Feltham, in his *Resolves*. "How like a naked beggar we see the weak soul skip under the lash of every sudden disaster; while the magnanimous and composed mind, by preparing and forethinking, meets nothing new, to bring him to amazement." Again and again in his letters the elder Humboldt describes himself as especially free from care, not because less exposed to misfortune than others, but because from early youth he had diligently taught himself to be prepared for every change of fortune. "He who cannot bear with firmness want and suffering, can never be free from want and suffering." "I receive Fortune's gifts thankfully, but should be very foolish to depend on their continuance." His strain is often that of Demipho in the *Phormio* of Terence:

"Quamobrem omnes, cum secundæ res sunt maxime, tum maxime
Meditari secum oportet, quo pacto adversum ærumnam ferant . . .
Quicquid præter spem eveniat, omne id deputare esse in lucro."

Scott's Hugo de Lacy, in *The Betrothed*, having lost all he carried to Palestine, and all which he left at home, is still lord of his own mind; and adversity, he declares, can no more shake him than the breeze which strips the oak of its leaves can tear up the trunk by the roots. So with El Hakim, in Sir Walter's other Tale of the Crusaders: "Fortune may raise up or abuse the ordinary mortal, but the sage and the soldier should have minds beyond her control." And it is as sage and soldier in one that

the Saracen Emir of the *Talisman* has the right so to speak. Old Sir Harry Lee, in *Woodstock*, shrinks not before his changes of fortune : he will wear coarser clothes, eat homelier food, and be greeted with less reverence, but "what of that?" Shakspeare is his favourite author, and "old Will" has taught him philosophy. Luther's Table-talk might have helped to arm him with the same mind : "If God gives thee to eat, eat ; if He cause thee to fast, be thou resigned thereto ; gives He thee honours ? take them ; hurt or shame ? endure it ; casts He thee into prison ? murmur not ; will He make thee a king ? obey Him ; casts He thee down again ? heed it not." For, "weet ye well," as Spenser's knight words it,

"that to a courage great
It is no lesse beseeming well to beare
The storme of fortune's frown or heaven's threat,
Than in the sunshine of her countenancee cleare
Timely to joy and carry comely cheare."

Don Quixote himself is in like manner exhorted by his squire : "Great hearts, dear sir," quoth Sancho, "should be patient under misfortunes, as well as joyful when all goes well." And in so saying, Sancho Panza can appeal with confidence to his own example ; for when he was made a governor, he was blithe and merry, and now that he is a poor squire on foot, he is not sad. He has heard say—and the saying is one he has laid to heart—that she they call Fortune is a light-headed freakish dame, and withal so blind that she does not see what she is about ; neither whom she raises nor whom she pulls down. His master admires the philosophy of his man, despite the homeliness of its form of expression ; in regard to which his less prosaic disposition would better have relished the rhetoric of a later philosopher,—that the equanimity which a few rare spirits preserve through the diversities of prosperous and adverse life, resembles the way in which certain aquatic plants spread their tops on the surface of the water, and with wonderful elasticity keep the surface still, whether the water swells or falls.

Mr. Froude's description is a striking one, of the last days of the mother of Mary Queen of Scots, "her body swollen with dropsy, the visible shadow of death fast closing over her," yet to the last going through her daily work with the same cheerful resolution, cool, clear, and dauntless, as became a daughter of the House of Guise. Her position was forlorn and even tragic. "But she came of a race who could bear the goods and ills of fortune with an even pulse." Like a namesake, of George Eliot's painting, she had long since had strong reason to believe that things were not likely to be arranged for her peculiar satisfaction, and she wasted no time in astonishment and annoyance at that fact. Lamartine challenges our admiration for Vergniaud, no longer impelled by illusion or ardour, but preserving "that stoical calmness which surpasses both," which sees the critical moment approach without blenching, and which, struggling without hope, accepts defeat as men accept martyrdom, with all the "indifference and heroism of free-will." The foremost foes of Theodoretus could not but admire and respect the man who, as he had been peaceful and moderate in prosperity, was so unaffectedly resigned and cheerful in adversity, and who accepted the decree of deposition from his bishopric with so becoming a grace. The Guelf Villani was fain to affirm of Henry of Luxemburg, that he was "never depressed by adversity, never in prosperity elated with pride, or intoxicated with joy." Foxites and Pittites agreed in according to Lord North this meed of praise, that as he never lost his good humour after his defeat and fall, so neither did he show himself less composed and equable when his time of triumph recurred. Of Napoleon, on the other hand, Chateaubriand says, that the first touch of adversity chilled his spirit: "The greatness of Napoleon was not of that quality which belongs to the hour of adversity; prosperity alone left him in the entire possession of his faculties—he was not made for misfortune." Contrast with this such a sketch as that drawn by Perthes of Besser, who "bore real trials well, was always ready for serious difficulties, never lost his

balance in sorrow, but was easily carried away by joy." *Rebus angustis animosus atque fortis.*

The elder of the brothers Hunt was characterized by Mr. Fonblanque as a man whose way through the world was a rough one, but whose constancy was even, and whom tribulations left unshaken: he was at arm's length with care throughout the active part of his life, but never mastered by it, for his goodness had a bravery in it which always bore him up. "Fortune's buffets, of which he had a full share, left no bruises on him, and extorted no murmurs." If never heard to repine, seldom, on the other hand, had he occasion to rejoice, and never for long. "He took whatever befell him, calmly, as his portion, and with a manly yet sweet resignation." Leigh might have said of John, in lines from Goethe's *Tasso*,

" Indeed I might
Esteem my brother, for his constant mind
Still with unswerving temper meets his fate."

Life's a lottery, and man should make up his mind to the blanks, is the sententious utterance of Colman's shipwrecked Peregrine, in *John Bull*. And thus runs the fifth of the eight stanzas designed by Mat Prior for his own monument:

" Now in equipage stately, now humbly on foot,
Both fortunes he tried, but to neither would trust;
And whirl'd in the round, as the wheel turn'd about,
He found riches had wings, and knew man was but dust."

The *Careless Content* of Dr. John Byrom, of shorthand celebrity, whose Diary forms one of the liveliest issues of the Chetham Society, offers another stanza that may serve our purpose:

" For chance or change of peace or pain,
For Fortune's favour or her frown,
For lack or glut, for loss or gain,
I never dodge, nor up nor down;
But swing what way the ship shall swim,
Or tack about with equal trim."

§ IV.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN.

FOR once has Shakspeare condescended to draw, in the scarcely distinguishable persons of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, a polite and placid pair of mere walking gentlemen. We do not care to tell one of them from the other. They make up a dual number, but there is nothing singular in either *per se*. As a couple they are convenient,—at least Claudius finds them so, and uses them accordingly. These supple and smooth-spoken courtiers are tools in his hands,—edge tools, in effect, of mischievous capacity, and turned to fatal purpose. This dual unity is capable of bad ends, and comes to a bad end. Nor is that tragical finis to be regretted so much on their account, as on Hamlet's, whom it places in an ugly position; to justify which, a good deal of special pleading is required, or perhaps is thrown away. The doomed pair evoke little of sympathy, as being caught in their own toils. Consistent to the last, they disappear together, as they have always done the walking gentlemen's part together. Not any too lovely and pleasant in their lives, in their death they are not divided.

Their dual unity, their lack of individuality, may be indicated in the terms of greeting with which they are severally, or rather are jointly, hailed by Claudius and Gertrude :

“King. Thanks, Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz.”

One epithet does for both. The Queen can think, it would seem, of no other compliment for Rosencrantz than the King has bestowed on Guildenstern. Perhaps it would have been invidious, as well as hazardous, to hit on any other. Rosencrantz is so like Guildenstern, because Guildenstern is so like Rosencrantz. Each is gentle, and both are walking gentlemen. *Fortisque Gyas, fortisque Cloanthus.* What *fortis* does for both the companions of Æneas, “gentle” will do for both the creatures of Claudius.

Arcades ambo. To such a pair it may be pardonable to

apply certain lines of Homer, as Englished by Pope, or by Pope's joint-stock company who did the *Odyssey* by contract :

“ The good old proverb how this pair fulfil !
One rogue is usher to another still.
Heaven with a secret principle endued
Mankind, to seek their own similitude.”

And the similitude between the Danish pair who shall gainsay ?

Literature has its Tapers and Tadpoles who hunt in couples. Each is the coefficient of the other. Each is to the other a *sine quâ non* condition, in the philosophy of the conditioned. The Gyas and Cloanthus of Virgil ; the Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern of Shakspeare ; the Piero and Futelli who echo each other's compliments and sentiments in the *Lady's Trial* of John Ford—till on one occasion Adurni has to bid them “ Stop, gentlemen, you run and gallop both ;” the Petit-André and Trois-Eschelles of *Quentin Durward*, Comedy and Tragedy incarnate in dual hangmen ; the Archduke of Austria's solemn *spruch-sprecher* and his volatile *hoff-narr*, or court jester (Jonas Schwanker), in *The Talisman* ; the Refectioner and the Kitchener in *The Monastery*, who, at Dame Glendinning's dinner-party, set off in a sort of duetto in praise of a monastic life, as if they had been chanting the service and the responses ; the Master Fibbet and Master Bibbet of *Woodstock*, whose affirmations, when they *do* speak, are as much in a common mould of mutual attestation, as their names would accord in the verses of a rhymester. To which motley series of elegant extracts from Scott may be appended the Messieurs Pyke and Pluck of Dickens—a sort of hendiadys of impersonal and inseparable P's ; while no less inseparable, but each with a distinct individuality, there rise before us the critics Soaper and Snarl, of Mr. Charles Reade ; with whom may range, after a sort, their own sort, Mr. Disraeli's Sir Chetwode Chetwode of Chetwode and Sir Tichborne Tichborne of Tichborne ; or again the Messieurs Mullins and Dickson, and Winthrop and Wyvill respectively, of Miss Eden's *Semi-Attached Couple*. Nor would the circle be complete without a well-read essayist's

Fribble and Fal-lal; Fribble with his womanish airs and languid drawl—a pinchbeck Horace Walpole, without wit or taste—and Fal-lal, to whom the Eternal Veracities centre in a charade or a cotillon. Which pair of country-house attachés may remind us, with a difference, of the Clove and Orange in *Every Man out of his Humour*, whom Jonson defines as “an inseparable case of coxcombs,” the Gemini, or twins, of foppery, who play into each other’s hands, and unite for practical effect their most sweet voices. Perhaps to these may be added the Gervaise and Tomboy of the madhouse in *Le Juif errant*; and the Denbigh and Beauchamp in Lister’s *Arlington*—despite their distinction with a difference; and certainly the Club inseparables, Wiggle and Waggle, in Thackeray’s *Book of Snobs*—Wiggle implying and involving Waggle, as much as Castor implied and involved Pollux.* Mrs. Trench pleasantly (or in the French sense perhaps maliciously) inclined to bracket Rogers and Jekyll in this sort of dining-out brotherhood—*par nobile fratrum*; various passages in her correspondence occurring to this effect: “I met Rogers and Jekyll at Roehampton; a pleasant *duo*, who keep time and tune together, and, in the language of musicians, mark their points.” Shaftesbury in the *Characteristics* is satirical at the expense of the harmonious dual of dialogues—the Philotheus and Philatheus, the Philautus and Philaethes, who are “of one and the same order; just tallies to one another; questioning and answering in concert, and with such a sort of alternative as is known in a vulgar play,” which his lordship accordingly describes. They might be described in Cowper’s image of another couple that

“Like the two figures at St. Dunstan’s stand,
Beating alternately, in measured time,” etc.

The Boots and Brewer of Dickens’s Veneering connexion

* Castor and Pollux, in conjunction with Denmark, remind us of Kohl’s mention of two Danish privates he came across, oddly enough named Hengist and Horsa; while, quite as oddly, it happened that in this case Hengist and Horsa, “like Castor and Pollux,” were still inseparably united, the places of the two soldiers being side by side in the ranks.—*Inseln und Marschen Schlesw.-Holstein*, i. 290.

are samples to the purpose, always knowing when to chime in, and managing their strophe and antistrophe with the practised art of experts. And so are the Cymbal and Fitton of Ben Jonson's *Staple of News*.—But this is harking back, and the cry now must be forwards.

When Serlo, Goethe's theatrical manager, suggests that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern might, conveniently for stage management, be "compressed into one," Wilhelm Meister energetically scouts the proposal, and indeed protests against all such curtailments, as destroying at once the sense and the effect. What these two persons are and do, it is impossible, he insists, to represent by one; in such small matters it is, he argues, that we discover Shakspeare's greatness. How, he asks, can a single man express all these soft approaches, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling, flattering, this whisking agility, this wagging of the tail, this "allness and emptiness, this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity?" Goethe was rather for having half of a dozen of these people, if they could be had; for it is only in society that they are anything; they *are* society itself, he said; and to his thinking Shakspeare showed no little wisdom and discernment in bringing in a pair of them. "With no tie of friendship, or capacity for true human comradeship," writes Professor Dowden, "the companions hunt in a couple; and they go with the same indistinguishable smirking and bowing to their fate in England." The critical student of *Shakspeare: His Mind and Art* recognizes grim irony in this ending of the courtiers' history. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives," after the taste of Claudius' court, "and in their death they were not divided." But that text we have had before.

In one respect may Rosencrantz and Guildenstern claim signal notice; and that is as a signal exception to the rule of individuality of portraiture in Shakspeare's characters. Together they make up an exception almost noteworthy enough to prove that rule. He has not been at the pains to differentiate the one of them from the other; or rather, perhaps, he has purposely left them undiscernible, and merged

their idiosyncrasies, if ever they had any, in practical, palpable, and perpetual identity. Surely he must have done this of design,—for who so lavish of those strokes of art which distinguish man from man, and assert the rights and the reality of individual character amid universal brotherhood? Who ever, like him, could preserve the distinction between a Rosalind and a Rosaline, a Leontes and a Leonatus, a First Gentleman and a Second, a jester at one court and at another?

In the belief that Shakspeare was the pupil of Chaucer, and that the fine bright folio of 1542, whose bold black letter seems the proper dress for the rich antique thought, was the Warwickshire lad's closet companion, Charles Knight assumes that he would "learn from Chaucer the possibility of delineating individual character with the minutest accuracy, without separating the individual from the permanent and the universal." Pope declares every single character in Shakspeare to be as much an individual as those in life itself; it is impossible to find any two alike, he affirmed; "and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will, upon comparison, be found remarkably distinct"—so that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are on no account to be confounded after all, but a remarkable distinction between them to be recognized, (if only, "upon comparison," it can be made out). With Shakspeare's men and women, observes a later authority, we can deal as with persons whom we know intimately, or whose qualities and properties we gather from the study of authentic records: though bodiless, and merely creatures of the brain, they are as palpable to the intellectual sense as the Charles or Cortes of Titian, or the Rupert and Henrietta of Vandyke, are to the natural eye; and in comparison with the vivid personality of Hamlet, Lear, and Macbeth, of Juliet, Ophelia, and Beatrice, of Falstaff, Dogberry, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, of the Henrys and Edwards, of the Antony and Coriolanus of Shakspeare, the most finished portraits of other stage poets are faint and uncertain, like those "ineffectual ghosts" whom Ulysses talked with in Hades. Nowhere else can August

Schlegel discover "so comprehensive a talent for characterization"—not only grasping every diversity of rank, age, and sex, down to the lisplings of infancy; not only making the king and the beggar, the hero and the cutpurse, the sage and the idiot, speak and act with equal truthfulness; not only realizing the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in their wars with the English, of the English themselves during so large a part of their history, of the Southern Europeans (in the serious parts of many comedies), the cultivated society of the day, and the rude barbarism of an earlier epoch; not only have Shakspeare's characters such depth and individuality that they do not admit of being classed under common names, and are inexhaustible even in conception;—"no, this Prometheus not merely forms men, he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits, . . . and these beings, though existing only in the imagination, nevertheless possess such truth and consistency, that even with such misshapen abortions as Caliban, he extorts the assenting conviction, that were there such beings they would so conduct themselves." If to invent according to nature be the true definition of genius, Shakspeare, as Hazlitt contends, had more of this quality than any other writer: he might be said to have been a joint worker with nature, and to have created an imaginary world of his own, which has all the appearance and the truth of reality. "His mind, while it exerted an absolute control over the strongest workings of the passions, was exquisitely alive to the slightest impulses and most evanescent shades of character and feeling"—the broad distinctions and governing principles of human nature being presented, not in the abstract, but in their immediate and endless applications to different persons and things. Without much exaggeration it has been asserted, that not one of his speeches could be put into the mouth of any other character than the one to which it is given, and that the transfer, if attempted, might be always detected from some other circumstance in the passage itself. "By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out of himself, and makes every word appear to

proceed from the very mouth of the person whose name it bears." Sainte-Beuve couples him with Molière, as representative men respectively, "qui ont le don de s'oublier eux-mêmes et de se transformer en une infinité de personnages qu'ils font vivre, parler et agir en mille manières pathétiques ou divertissantes." English critics will, for the most part, accord to Molière, in this respect, what they would deny to Corneille and to Racine, unless indeed it be a fallacy to aver that in these dramatists the class only is represented, never the individual, that their kings, their heroes, and their lovers are all the same, and are all French—nothing but the mouth-pieces of certain rhetorical, commonplace sentiments on the favourite topics of morality and the passions. The characters in Shakspeare, on the other hand, as viewed by no admirer of French tragedy, do not declaim like pedantic schoolboys,* but speak and act like men, placed in real circumstances, with real hearts of flesh and blood beating in their bosoms. "No two of his characters are the same, more than they would be so in nature"—those that are the most alike being distinguished by positive differences, which accompany and modify the leading principle of the character through its most obscure ramifications, embodying the habits, gestures, and almost the looks of the individual. "Les personnages de Corneille sont grands, généreux, vaillants; . . . ils ont sans cesse à la bouche des maximes auxquelles ils rangent leur vie; et comme ils ne s'en écartent jamais, on n'a pas de peine à les saisir; un coup d'œil suffit: ce qui est presque le contraire des personnages de Shakspeare et des caractères humains dans cette vie." So again, Corneille "faisait ses héros tout d'une pièce, bons ou mauvais de pied en cap." Schiller and Goethe have often been contrasted with a like effect; Schiller's very personality (as in the cases of Rousseau and Byron) being one of the causes of his success, for he "could paint little except himself," and all his women (the good ones at least) are formed

* "By the speeches given to the leaders of the Grecian host, Nestor, Ulysses, Agamemnon, Achilles, Shakspeare seems to have known them as well as if he had been a spy sent by the Trojans into the enemy's camp."—Hazlitt on *Troilus and Cressida*.

from one type : this want of pliancy of imagination is assigned to his exclusively "subjective" tendency ; whereas the "objective" tendency of Goethe (which, however, as Mr. Herman Merivale shows, has been overrated, or misapprehended) enabled him to look out upon nature, and reflect as a mirror the whole universe of things.* Hence is it so hard to discover in Goethe's writings, as Mr. Carlyle long since observed, his temper, affections, individual specialities ; for all lives freely within him : Philina and Clärchen, Mephistopheles and Mignon, are alike indifferent, or alike dear to him ; he is of no sect or caste : he seems not this man or that man, but a man. "Such figures as Goethe's you will look for through all modern literature, and except here and there in Shakspeare, nowhere find a trace of." Macaulay confessed that to him the speech of Sempronius in Addison's *Cato* seemed very nearly as good as Shakspeare could have made it ; but when the senate breaks up, and we find that the lovers and their mistresses, the hero, the villain, and the deputy-villain, all continue to harangue in the same style, we perceive the difference between a man who can write a play and a man who can write a speech. Nature, says Shaftesbury, has characterized tempers and minds as peculiarly as faces ; and for an artist who draws naturally, it is not enough to show us merely faces which may be called men's : every face must be a certain man's. Archbishop Whately somewhere expresses a doubt whether Shakspeare ever had any thought at all of making his personages speak characteristically ; he drew characters correctly, because he could not avoid it,—his peculiar genius consisting chiefly in his forming the same distinct and consistent idea of an imaginary person, that any ordinary man forms of a real and well-known individual. And in this way it is argued that Shakspeare *could* no more have endured an utterance from the lips of Macbeth, inconsistent with the character originally conceived, than an ordinary man

* Wieland, on the other hand, objected to a speciality in Goethe which distinguishes him from Homer and Shakspeare,—the "I," the "Ille Ego," glimmers through everywhere, though without ostentation and with consummate delicacy.

could attribute to his most respectable acquaintance the behaviour of a ruffian, or to a human being the voice of a bird, or to a European the features and hue of a negro. Merely from the vividness of the original conception, it is argued, did characteristic conduct and language spontaneously suggest themselves to the great dramatist's pen: he called his personages into being, and left them, as it were, to speak and act for themselves. As M. Demogeot words it, "Il leur donne une vie indépendante, qui n'est ni gênée par la volonté arbitraire du poète, ni même par les exigences de l'action. Une fois conçus et animés d'une existence personnelle, il les lance sans arrière-pensée à travers les événements: c'est à eux de se faire librement leur destinée."* Mr. Lewes asserts that the dramatic form "quite baffles us with Shakspeare," but baffles us with no one else: it is easy to divine the opinions of Aristophanes, Molière, or Schiller. So too rhymes and reasons the poet of St. Stephen's:

"Each guess of others into worlds unknown
Shakspeare revolves, but guards conceal'd his own—
As in the Infinite hangs poised his thought,
Surveying all things, and asserting nought."

The Proteus of human intellect, Hazlitt calls him: "Born universal heir to all humanity," he was "as one, in suffering all who suffered nothing;" with a perfect sympathy with all

* Shakspeare, says this critic, sympathizes with every mode of existence, and with ideas of every kind; it seems as though man in his totality were alive in him. "He transforms himself successively into all his characters, and forgets his own sentiments while adopting theirs."—In various parts of his critical history of French literature, M. Demogeot takes occasion to contrast French dramatists with Shakspeare in this respect. Of Ducis, for instance, he remarks that he was too *fortement* himself for dramatic transformation into the characters he drew: he lacked that supple faculty of thought, that impassioned indifferentism, or rather that universal sympathy which enables a tragic poet to live all other lives and to reflect in himself the wide wide world entire. To Victor Hugo, again, the same critic objects that, for a dramatist, he is always too lyrical; that, *au rebours de Shakspeare*, he makes his own personality dominate in the personages he creates: they often say fine things, but it is too obvious that they are reciting a part, saying a lesson, repeating a lecture. It is M. Victor Hugo we hear speak, not Gomez, not Didier.

things, yet alike indifferent to all ; who did not tamper with nature or warp her to his own purposes ; who "knew all qualities with a learned spirit," instead of judging of them by his own predilections ; and was rather "a pipe for the Muse's finger to play what stop she pleased," than anxious to set up any character or pretensions of his own. One of the most intelligent and reflective of his biographers comes to the conclusion that Shakspeare possessed, above all other men, so complete a mastery over the tendency to colour general representations of life and character with personal views and circumstances, that he invariably went out of himself—that he saw nothing through his individual feelings—and that thus none of his portraits are alike, because none are personifications of his own nature, his own life, his own self-consciousness. Shelley professed in the Preface to his one tragedy to having endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and to "avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true ; thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind." It was to Shakspeare no effort to do this. He probably did not consciously even endeavour or seek to do it : it came naturally to him, for he was a born dramatist. Whoever draws purely from himself, it has been said, can give us at best a limited experience—the passions or logic of a single mind ; but the great fathers of art, who took fearlessly what they found around them, and worked up all the ages into song, partake of the breadth and energy of our common human nature—the workings of a morbid self-consciousness (as in Byron) are beyond the limits of their art. Emerson says of Shakspeare, "He was the farthest reach of subtlety compatible with an individual self—the subtilest of authors," clothing the creatures of his legend with form and sentiments, as if they were people who had lived under his roof : "few real men have left such distinct characters as these fictions. . . . He has no discoverable egotism." Malone conjectured that the exclamations of Constance were the *veræ voces pectore ab imo* of the poet himself, who at the writing

of *King John* had to lament the loss of his only son. It might be so, remarked one of Malone's contemporaries; but Shakspeare never seemed to find the slightest difficulty in drawing from his fancy alone the genuine expression of any passion incident to our nature.

If ever mortal man could be said to be inspired, remarked Moore once to Lord Lansdowne, it was Shakspeare, who alone of all writers seemed to have the power of transmitting into every other class and condition of men, and thinking and speaking as they would do under every possible change of feeling and circumstance. He was wise in the world, having studied it in his heart, says Mrs. Browning, who takes what is called "the knowledge of the world" to be just the knowledge of one heart, and certain exterior symbols. Every being is his own mirror to the universe. "Shakspeare wrote from within—the beautiful; and we recognize from within—the true. He is universal, because he is individual." Lord Lytton ascribes to him precedence over all poets who deal with the objective, inasmuch as his own personality is so abnegated or concealed that it needs the finest observer to conjecture what might be Shakspeare's individual opinions and beliefs apart from those which he puts into the lips of his characters. It is, however, a pet thesis of Sir Percival Tracey's, that much more patently than is generally supposed does Shakspeare reveal to us his own personal nature, his religious and political beliefs, his favourite sentiments and cherished opinions; in fact, that although the Drama is, of all compositions, that in which the author can least obtrude on us his personality, yet that of all dramatists Shakspeare the most frequently presents to us his own.* Another dissertator on Shakspearian æsthetics remarks that no man leaves behind him in quantity so large an intellectual

* Sir Percival essayed to prove this, by marking all the passages of assertion or reflection in the plays which are not peculiarly appropriate to the speaker, nor called for by the situation—often, indeed, purely episodical to the action; and where in such passages the same or similar ideas are repeated, he argues that Shakspeare himself is speaking, and not the person in the dialogue.

legacy as Shakspeare left, especially when the quality is rare and the variety great, without having put on record incidentally many marks of the detailed workings of his mind ; and not only of his special intellectual processes or principles, but also of his tastes and sympathies. And though the query is obvious, Who can say much on these matters respecting Shakspeare? who does not feel himself to be better informed about the likes and dislikes of Falstaff, Romeo, Othello, or even Hamlet, than he is about the views and sentiments of their originator?—the reason being that the genius of Shakspeare was not only profoundly dramatic, but profoundly faithful to dramatic requirement, and thus he becomes individually lost; lost doubly, in the completeness and the variety of his dramatic creations;—still, though lost to surface study and indiscriminating observation, there is no reason why he should not be found, if carefully searched after. For, in point of fact, “the works of Shakspeare do actually contain traces, more or less distinct, of what he thought and felt on a great variety of subjects, and by setting these indications side by side a united whole may be gained which tells us a good deal about his mind or heart in this or that.” Of Bacon it has been said that, like Shakspeare, he tries much more to reflect all the varied truth of human nature than to reconcile its anomalies, and strike a judicial balance amid appearances of good and evil, so vast, so fluctuating, and so inscrutable. If he gives both sides, it is not because he is indifferent to truth, but because his supreme wish is to exhibit all that can be known and discovered. And these antagonist representations, it is argued, are to be taken as we might take opposite views of some great side of human nature and feeling; as we might find Shakspeare’s thoughts on Love in the words of Jessica or Miranda, or from a very different point of view in those of Isabella or Ophelia. “In much of his moral observation on the facts of human nature Bacon is as impersonal as Shakspeare. He tells you what he has seen in the course of his experience, but he does not even profess to let you into his whole mind and final judgment.” In other words, he sets you thinking, and gives you

the materials for various trains of meditation ; but he does not provide you with a formal conclusion, any more than Shakspeare does by the moralizing which he puts into the mouth of his speakers. The "grand impersonality" of what Shakspeare wrote, moves Professor Lowell to a burst of admiring eloquence. "What has he told us of himself? In our self-exploiting nineteenth century, with its melancholy liver-complaint, how serene and high he seems!" If he had sorrows, he has made them the woof of everlasting consolation to his kind ; and if, as poets are wont to whine, the outward world was cold to him, its biting air did but trace itself in "loveliest frost-work of fancy on the many windows of that self-centred and cheerful soul." Elsewhere it is said of him that he loves the hawk-nature as well as the hen-nature ; and that if he is unequalled in anything, it is in that sunny breadth of view, that impregnability of reason, which looks down all ranks and conditions of men, all fortune and misfortune, with the equal eye of the pure artist.

Although it might be paradoxical to assert that no poet or novelist ever really described more than one character, and that that one was himself, yet might as fair a case be made out for it, one approved critic submits, as for most paradoxes. "We might say, if we chose, for nobody could contradict us, Hamlet was nothing but Shakspeare in a melancholy mood, and Falstaff Shakspeare in his cups, and Othello Shakspeare under a jealous impulse." But this sort of affirmation is more safely ventured in dealing with an average novelist or an egoistic poet than with such a spirit as Shakspeare's. We do it wrong, being so majestic. "Ce grand Shakspeare," as a French critic hails him, "*le voyant, le confident, ou plutot le confesseur de l'humanité entière.*" M. Philarète Chasles somewhere sums up "*les deux cents et quelques individus tous différents, que contiennent les drames de Shakspeare.*"* In contrast with this may be read what M. Granier de

* In his *Études sur le Moyen Age* the same writer expatiates on the more than thirty varieties in Shakspeare of old age alone : the old Lear, sublime, tender, mad ; the old Polonius, axiomatical, sage, and stupid ; the old pedant Holofernes ; the old, hasty, quick-spoken, hot-tempered

Cassagnac has written about the *caractères généraux, espèces d'abstraction morales*, of his national drama in the seventeenth century.

Dr. Johnson made it a part of Shakspeare's merit that, whereas "in the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual," in his it is commonly a species. Pope, on the other hand, praised Shakspeare for making all his characters individuals. And of the two views, Schlegel takes Pope's to be unquestionably the more correct; for a character which should be merely a personification of a naked general idea could exhibit no great depth and no great variety. Mr. Nassau Senior doubted if Johnson could have attached any precise meaning to his sentence. Inferior writers content themselves with giving to each character a superabundance of one or two habits, faculties, or passions; but such a character is strictly a species, not an individual; it is logically constituted of a genus and a differentia; and not such are the characters of real life. "Nature proceeds not by abstraction, but by concretion. We know that every individual with whom we have been acquainted has differed in innumerable points from every other individual; and we recognize the truth of those fictitious characters only which have also their distinguishing peculiarities, and which may be referred, according to the point in which we are for the time considering them, to one or another of many different species." This, to Mr. Senior, appeared to be the great merit of Shakspeare; and he rejoiced in being able to support himself, against the authority of Johnson, by one whom he styles "the best of all Commentators on Shakspeare,"—meaning Whately; not his friend the Archbishop, but the acute and unappreciated author of *Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakspeare*.

It was Shakspeare's prerogative, said Coleridge, to have the universal, which is potentially, in each particular, opened out to him, "the *homo generalis*, not as an abstraction from observation of a variety of men, but as the substance capable

Capulet; and so on, *jusqu'au bout du monde des vicillards*, no two alike, but all alive.

of endless modifications, of which his own personal existence was but one, and to use this one as the eye that beheld the other, and as the tongue that could convey the discovery." There is no greater or more common vice in dramatic writers than to draw out of themselves. "Shakspeare, in composing, had no *I*, but the *I* representative." He is contrasted on this account with Beaumont and Fletcher, in whom we have descriptions of characters by the poet rather than the characters themselves: we are told, and impressively told, of their being; but we rarely or never feel that they actually are. Elsewhere Coleridge pronounces Shakspeare's characters to be all *genera* intensely individualized: the results of meditation, of which observation supplied the drapery and the colours necessary to combine them with each other. He had virtually surveyed all the great component powers and impulses of human nature,—had seen that their different combinations and subordinations were in fact the individualizers of men. "Habitué à s'identifier à tous les caractères qu'il produit sur la scène, il fait disparaître l'auteur dramatique, et se constitue le greffier impassible de l'histoire." In delineating types, he falls not into the frigid error of representing mere philosophical abstractions; preferring generals to particulars, he vivifies his generals into types of humanity. So reasons the Caxtonian essayist: "The finest of Shakspeare's imaginary characters are essentially typical. No one would suppose that the poet was copying from individuals of his acquaintance in the delineations of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, Iago, Angelo, Romeo. They are as remote from portraiture as are the conceptions of Caliban and Ariel." The distinctive excellence of Shakspeare's highest characters is accordingly held to be this, that while they embody truths the most subtle, delicate, and refining in the life and organization of men, those truths are so assorted as to combine with the elements which humanity has most in common; a result which could not be effected if the characters themselves, despite all that is peculiar to each, were not, on the whole, typical of broad and popular divisions in the human family. "It is Shakspeare's peculiar excellence," wrote Coleridge in *The Friend*, "that

throughout the whole of his splendid picture-gallery . . . we find individuality everywhere, mere portrait nowhere." Accordingly, the excellence of the method of his works is defined as consisting in that just proportion, that union and interpenetration of the universal and the particular, which must ever pervade all works of decided genius and true science. In supper-table-talk at Charles Lamb's once, Coleridge drew a parallel between Shakspeare and a geometrician: the latter, when tracing a circle, has his eye upon the centre as the important point, but includes also in his vision a wide circumference; so Shakspeare, while his eye rested upon an individual character, always embraced a wide circumference of others, without diminishing the separate interest he intended to attach to the being he portrayed. He was no mere painter of portraits, with the dress, features, and peculiarities of the sitter; but a painter of likenesses so true that, although nobody could perhaps say they knew the very person represented, all saw at once that it was faithful, and that it must be a likeness. In the seventh lecture of his course on Shakspeare, as reported for us by Mr. Collier, we find Coleridge saying, "I know no character in his plays, (unless indeed Pistol be an exception,) which can be called the mere portrait of an individual:" while the reader feels all the satisfaction arising from individuality, yet that very individual is a sort of class character; and this circumstance renders Shakspeare the poet of all ages. It has been observed by a critic of De Foe, one of the defects of whose mind was that it worked by details, that a greater genius can flash out as sharp and full an image of a concrete man as any of his, and unencumbered with useless minutiae: it can at once seize the very essence of some special attribute of human nature, and embody it in a complete and individual man: it can give you Claudio, Angelo, Lucio, Isabella, within the limits of five acts; and in doing so it furnishes, under stringent restrictions of form and in limited space, a greater variety of character than can be found within the whole range of De Foe's novels, and leaves as distinct an image of each man as we can form of the heroes of his most laboured autobiographical narratives,

—not, perhaps, as familiar, but as distinct and complete. Every artistic mind, says William Caldwell Roscoe, “grasps at individual wholes;” but not to every one is given the power to reproduce them in the complex reality in which they exist in the living world. Some, with a passion for creation, but without a strong sense of the beauty of concrete wholes, “personify abstract emotions,” and if they create a man, make him only the incarnation of a single passion, or of a set of opinions or feelings: “Their imagination does not grasp at a passionate man, but at passions which it endows with the attributes of man.” Or as that refined critic the late George Brimley put it, they drop the individual and the special altogether, and attempt to present a law of human nature in operation upon beings who are human without being particular men or women. None the less he enforced the doctrine that the highest poetry gives the law as well as the special instance, interprets humanity as well as some individual life, and becomes highest by blending, as they say, the universal with the particular.*

Modern critics show character to have been nearly impossible on the Greek stage; it was the type, not the individual, that was represented. There was a type of the king, the priest, the soldier, the statesman, of the matrons and the virgins of old great houses; but of the distinction between King John and Henry V., between Lady Macbeth and Lady Constance, the Greek theatre was incapable; while “a Juliet, a Rosalind, a Cordelia, or a Beatrice would have found no place upon a stage that exhibited women as either viragos or victims.” The Roman theatre, as typical as the Greek, was even scantier in its types. Of Calderon’s many plays, few possess any truly human character: compared with Benedick and Lear, with Romeo and Othello, with the feudal and the Tudor chivalry of Shakspeare, Calderon’s

* By which he simply means that true portraiture of individual life “necessarily involves generic and specific as well as individual truth; that John or Mary must be man and woman—English man and English woman—to be a pair of real human beings, under the influence of any particular feelings.”—*Essays* by Geo. Brimley, p. 86.

men and women are "little better than theatrical ghosts, such thin and shadowy spectres as Hermes in the Odyssey drives before him in Hades." The ideal of the Spanish stage is said indeed to have admitted of character as little as the sacred stories of the Spanish painters admitted of variety or arbitrary form of presentment. As Mr. Lewes says, the man is not before you, but the passion: the passion is there, but not the passionate man. "Nowhere throughout the Spanish drama can you find a character; everywhere personification;"—so that if you remember any person in these dramas, it is by what he did, and not by what he felt; because the difference is only in the actions, not in individualities. Contrasting all this with Shakspeare, who has drawn heartless, accomplished, intellectual villains in Iago, Edmund, and Richard III.,—and jealous, impetuous, passionate husbands in Leontes, Leonatus, and Othello,—and wronged, patient, loving wives in Hermione, Imogen, and Desdemona,—Mr. Lewes goes on to say of these latter, that so various, so distinct are the individualities, in the midst of their generic resemblances, that the general similarity is rarely detected, and the characters never for an instant confounded.* On Shakspeare's men and women, volumes have been, and will continue to be, written—the theme and the aspects of it being as fertile and almost as numerous as the classes of mankind itself; but as a Saturday Reviewer asserts, a very slender volume could contain all the types and all the really individual characters of the European drama, as well as of the old English theatre: hence the common phrase, "the world of Shakspeare," is not more common than true, for it is a world of beings as truly as the natural world is: it ranges

* So with the endless fools in Shakspeare. "Folly of all shades and antics, shapes itself into distinctive realities. Who ever mistook the braggart Parolles for the braggart Pistol? the conceited Bottom for the puffed-up Malvolio? the acquiescent Snug for the acquiescent Verges? the dotard Dogberry for the dotard Polonius?—And who could ever distinguish one *gracioso* of the Spaniards from another? who remembers their names?"—G. H. Lewes, *The Spanish Drama*, chap. iv.

from the heights to the depths of existence, from Hamlet to Caliban, and extends from the "undiscovered country" beyond the grave to the brute creation, from the ghost of the elder Hamlet to Launce's dog Crab. "It is not composed of a few protagonists and many lay-figures; each one of the *dramatis personæ* has its 'business and desires.' Montano and Ludovico are distinct persons; we feel not merely that they have their place and meaning in the story, but that they say and do exactly what a sober governor or a Venetian gentleman would do and say under the circumstances." Pope alleged the characters of Shakspeare to be so much Nature herself, that to call them by so distant a name as copies of her "is a sort of injury." *Il les fait à nos yeux vivre, agir, et parler.* It is what Hartley Coleridge calls the paramount privilege and function of a real dramatist, to create characters possessing a self independent of his own; * his personages are not fragments of the circumference of his own being, but have each a separate

* It was a favourite notion of Edward, Lord Lytton's, that perhaps the most extensive and universal masters of life and character have begun by being egotists,—there being in every man who has much in him, a "wonderfully acute and sensitive perception of his own existence"—an imaginative and susceptible person having in him ten times as much life as a dull fellow, "an' he be Hercules." Such a master spirit, the argument goes, will multiply himself in a thousand objects, associating each with his own identity, and almost looking upon the world with its infinite objects as a part of his individual being. Afterwards, as he tones down, he withdraws his forces into the citadel, but he still has a knowledge of, and an interest in, the land they once covered. "He understands other people, for he has lived in other people—the dead and the living;—fancied himself now Brutus and now Cæsar, and thought how *he* should act in almost every imaginable circumstance of life." Then, when he begins to paint human characters, essentially different from his own, his knowledge comes to him almost intuitively, and it is as if he were describing the mansions in which he himself has formerly lodged; and hence, in great writers of history, of romance, of the drama, the *gusto* with which they paint their personages; "their creations are flesh and blood, not shadows or machines." By some critics the author of *The Parisians* has been held to have never advanced beyond the earlier, the subjective stage, of absolute egotism, as though Ernest Maltravers never really became any one else.

centre, a principle within them acting upon each other, subject to reaction from each other as much as actual living men. "In short, they are persons, and neither puppets nor abstractions; they vouch for their own truth and reality." They stand out in salient contrast to the creations of "*nos poètes classiques*," as M. Henri Taine has it, whose fault is "*de mettre en scène non des hommes, mais des idées générales; leurs personnages sont des passions abstraites qui marchent et dissertent.*" From another point of view, Henri Beyle (De Stendhal) incidentally refers to Byron as the least dramatic of poets, as utterly unable to transform himself into another person; and hence, inferred the critic, his marked antipathy to Shakspeare: "*Je crois de plus qu'il [Byron] le méprisait pour avoir pu se transformer en Shylock, vil juif de Venise, ou en Jean Cade, méprisable démagogue.*" The much-vexed question whether Shakspeare's personages are types or individuals, is judiciously answered by Mr. Grant White with the conclusion that they are both: those which are of his own creation are type-individuals—so real are they in their individuality, so sharply outlined and compactly constructed, that the men and women we meet seem but shadows compared with them, and yet each one of them is so purged of the accidental and non-essential as to become typical, ideal. "He made them so by uniting and harmonizing in them a variety of traits, all subordinated to, yet overwhelmed by, one central and dominating trait, and by so modifying and colouring the manifestation of that trait, that of itself it has individuality." Shakspeare's persons are recognized accordingly as thoroughly human, and therefore not embodiments of single traits or single impulses, but complicated machines, and the higher the style the more complex their organization.* He combines in

* What Macaulay derides as the silly notion that every man has one ruling passion, and that this clue, once known, unravels all the mysteries of his conduct, finds no countenance in the plays of Shakspeare, where man appears as he is, made up of a crowd of passions, which contend for the mastery over him, and govern him by turns. As Mr. Grant White reasons, it is the consequent complication of motive which causes the

one individual and harmonizes qualities apparently incongruous, his genius revealing to him their affinities. "His personages are not statuesque with sharp, unchanging outlines. His genius was not severe and statuesque, as, for instance, Dante's was." Not only are his men and women shown to be singularly flexible, but they seem to have that quality of flesh and blood which unites changeableness with identity; as a man's substance changes and his soul grows older year by year, and yet he is the same person. The remark is a fine one, that it is not only the story in Shakspeare's dramas which makes progress, but the characters of the personages: Lear, Romeo, Macbeth, Othello, are not the same men at the end of the play as at the beginning. "Their experience has modified their characters." Life has told on living men.

characters of Shakspeare to be read differently by different people—this variety of opinion upon them, within certain wide and well-determined limits, being evidence of the truthfulness of their characters. Nay, the judgment of the same man upon them will be modified by his experience: our view of them is enlarged and qualified by advancing years. "As we grow older we look upon them from a higher point, and the horizon of our sympathy with them broadens."—See the Essay on the *Genius of Shakspeare*, by the accomplished author who previously wrote himself, as well as his book, *Shakspeare's Scholar*.

CHAPTER X.

Hamlet and the Players.

§ I.

MR. THEODORE MARTIN, in one of those delightful essays on the drama which are far too little known, asserts as a rule, that artists may teach amateurs, but amateurs can never teach artists. "Anybody thinks he is fit to criticise acting. As well might a man, on the strength of the light of nature, set up for a critic of sculpture—nay, sooner, for there is no art more complex in its requirements than that of the actor in its higher branches." "Were an amateur to tell Stanfield or Cooke how to paint a sea—and amateurs sometimes do things quite as outrageous—surely these artists might, without any imputation of jealousy, retort that he did not know what he was talking about." But there is no rule without its exceptions. Hamlet was an amateur, and Hamlet showed himself quite up to the task of teaching actors how to act. Hamlet knew what he was talking about. He taught the players how to declaim, by doing it for them first: "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue." The amateur was, in this exceptional instance, not only consciously but obviously the superior of the actors he was "coaching." But then behind Hamlet, to prompt him, stands Shakspeare himself; and Shakspeare was artist as well as author, actor as well as critic, player as well as poet.

Never is the day likely to dawn when Hamlet's instructions to the players will be superfluous or effete. Wherever in the wide world there is a stage to strut upon, there is

safe to be the man who saws the air too much with his hand as he speaks ; or who tears a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings ; or who fails to suit the action to the word, the word to the action,—who overdoes, or comes short of, his part ; who struts and bellows, or who utters more than is set down for him,—in purpose to make the unskilful laugh, in effect to make the judicious grieve.

In the most ancient example extant of a dramatic work in French, the *Adam* which M. Louis Moland has ably analysed in his *Origines littéraires de la France*,* there are instructions to the players appended, not unworthy of the tone of the Prince of Denmark. Adam is cautioned to be neither too hasty nor too slack in catching up his cues. And not Adam alone, but all the *dramatis personæ* are exhorted to speak as becomes their several parts, and with action to suit the words : “qu'ils fassent le geste en rapport avec la chose dont ils parlent ; et que dans les rythmes [les vers] ils n'ajoutent ni ne retranchent une syllabe”—which bit of *avis* of the twelfth century might well be addressed, as Sainte-Beuve suggests, to more than one tragedian or tragedienne, whether of his country or ours,—“mais qu'ils prononcent tout avec fermeté, et que tout ce qui est à dire soit recité avec ordre et suite.” Of course it is possible to be over-instructive ; and a fashion once set in of interfusing as it were a Dorat's treatise on *La déclamation théâtrale* with the plays one wrote, and of explaining in most expansive form how the actor must say and do this, that, and the other thing, throughout the whole course of the piece. Schlegel inveighed against the custom that had grown up in Germany of giving long and circumstantial directions respecting the action—the poet giving an order on the player, instead of paying out of his own purse. “The speeches should be so framed that an intelligent actor could

* Didier, 1862. The drama itself had been for the first time published some eight years previously, by M. Victor Luzarche, from a manuscript in the Library at Tours.

hardly fail to give them the proper action." In England the fashion prevailed for a short time, in imitation of Kotzebue and his clan; but the ridicule of Canning in *The Anti-Jacobin* may be said to have exploded it. For a half-century at least. Mr. Fechter, the countryman of Diderot (to whom Schlegel would trace this ill fashion), went a good way towards reviving the minuteness of marginal injunctions, in his "Acting Edition" of *Othello*, which was properly pulled to pieces accordingly by English critics who knew *their* part.* Rules, said Baron (by some styled the French Garrick), may teach us not to raise the arms above the head; but if passion carries them, all will be well done; passion knows more than art. And without passion who can be a great actor, any more than without art one can be even a passable one?

The great French actor, Le Kain, whom a Quarterly Reviewer lately cited as an illustrious instance of the power and patience of genius to overcome the disadvantages of face and figure for a vocation where such disadvantages are most felt—that inexpressible something which made "Pritchard genteel, and Garrick six feet high,"—affirmed soul to be the foremost requisite of the actor; intelligence the second; truth and fervour of utterance the third; grace and symmetry of person the fourth. Among the qualities which, in Le Kain's estimate, go to constitute the claim to be considered great in his profession, are these: to be thoroughly master of one's parts, to know the force and significance of every line, never to lose sight of Nature, to be simple, noble, affecting; to be assured that understanding is not to be acquired save by ripe meditation, nor practical skill save by persevering toil; to be always in one's

* Foremost among whom may be cited the refined contributor to *Fraser's Magazine* (Art. "Shakspeare, and his latest Stage Interpreters") to whom we also owe such sound and salutary essays as those on "Plays, Players, and Critics" (1863), "The Drama in London" (1865), as well as "The Drama in England" in the *Quarterly Review* of January 1872, and the elaborate notice of David Garrick in an earlier volume of the same *Review*.

part ; to use the picturesque with skilful reserve ; to be as true in level speaking as in the great movements of passion ; to avoid whatever is trivial ; to make one's pauses not too frequent ; to let nobility of style be seen across one's lightest moods ; to avoid jerkiness in speaking ; to weep only when the soul is stormed and thrust in upon itself by grief ; to show unbroken attention to what is passing on the stage, and to identify oneself with the characters one represents.

Citing the traditional accounts left us of such players as, *inter alios*, Hart, Mohun, Lacy, Haines, Betterton, Kynaston, Nokes, Booth, etc., Charles Dibdin infers them to have been not mere "auricular imitators, not mannerists, not copies of this or that particular whim, fancy, deportment, voice, or manner, but judges of nature through all her various workings, and close observers of all the passions that move and actuate the mind of man." But for the best part of the first half of the eighteenth century, nature was histrionically sacrificed to art. The axiom that the stage is nought, which does not "hold the mirror up to nature," had taken deep hold, as Mr. Theodore Martin shows, of Garrick's mind ; but from the actual stage little David found that nature, especially in the poetical drama, had all but vanished, and in its place had come a purely conventional and monotonous style of declamation, with a stereotyped system of action no less formal and unreal. "There was a noble opening for any one who should have the courage and the gifts to return to nature and to truth, and Garrick felt that it was 'in him' to effect the desired revolution." Recurrent revolutions of the same kind, perhaps varying in degree, are indispensable from time to time. Mr. Charles Reade, in the most histrionic of his novels, and perhaps almost the nearest perfection as a work of art, refers to "the grand discovery, which Mr. A. Wigan on the stage, and every man of sense off it, has made in our day and nation,"—namely, that the stage is a representation not of stage, but of life ; and that an actor ought to speak and act in imitation of human beings, not of speaking machines that have run and creaked in a stage groove, with their eyes shut

upon the world at large, upon nature, upon truth, upon man, upon woman, and upon child. Early in the present century Leigh Hunt advised the theatres to take down those inscriptions over their stage which invite us to contemplate the representation of ourselves (*veluti in speculum*), since that magnificent, that polished mirror, which reflected all our features with so animated a resemblance, which obeyed the momentary varieties of our attitude, and glanced forth the nicest movements of our countenance, had been exchanged for a glass full of excrescences and undulations, in which the human figure becomes a mere laughable monstrosity, a thing of grimace and distortion, a shadow that mocks the spectator with fantastic ugliness. Authors wrote to suit actors, and the public loved to have it so. Playwrights and players live to please, and must please to live.

To please, and move, was the avowed end of Congreve, in the prologue to his tragedy of the *Mourning Bride*:

"Art may direct, but nature is his aim;
And nature miss'd, in vain he boasts his art,
For only nature can affect the heart."

In another mood opens the prologue to Vanbrugh's comedy of the *Provoked Wife*; but equally to our purpose:

"Since 'tis the intent and business of the stage
To copy out the follies of the age,
To hold to every man a faithful glass,
And show him of what species he's an ass," etc.

So Boileau, in the third canto, or *chant*, of *L'Art Poétique*:

"Chacun, peint avec art dans ce nouveau miroir,
S'y vit avec plaisir, ou crut ne s'y point voir.
* * * * *
Ce n'est pas un portrait, une image semblable;
C'est un amant, un fils, un père véritable."

Although *veluti in speculum*, as a Saturday Reviewer observes, has long been deemed the most appropriate motto for the proscenium of a theatre, he who watched the action of an ordinary comedy in the hopes of seeing so much as a faint reflection of real life, would commit as egregious a blunder as if he looked in a mirror suspended

with its back against the exterior wall of a house, with the intention of finding out the occupation of the inhabitants. "The fault is not in the glass, but in the direction towards which it is turned. Whatever, according to Hamlet's view, may be the purpose of playing, certainly the notion of holding the mirror up to nature is usually the last that occurs to the mind of the dramatist. Your British playwright is generally of a cautious temperament—likes only to trust himself in craft that have already proved seaworthy. Hence his bit of looking-glass is instinctively turned towards the successful figures created by his professional forefathers." He has no sympathy with, perhaps no comprehension of, Pope's line,

"For Wit's false mirror hold up Nature's light,"

in its application to the stage. *Veluti in Speculum* is the formal heading of another critical essay, which opens with a complaint that the London stage, far from representing English life, constantly exhibits a series of personages and situations that have no existence beyond the walls of a theatre. Little enough there is of what Cowper calls "the expedients and inventions multiform" of the poetic (that is the creative) faculty, exerting itself

"To arrest the fleeting images that fill
The mirror of the mind, and hold them fast,
And force them sit, till he has pencill'd off
A faithful likeness of the forms he views."

Nearly half a century ago, Mr. Lister said there were few modern comedies in which amateurs would not find much that would keep them constantly reminded that they were acting on a stage. There might be sometimes the language of wit, and sometimes that of sentiment, but hardly ever the language of society. And the actors were correspondingly stagey and unreal. "The man of fashion always drawls and uses an eyeglass. If he did not, the pit and gallery would not know what to make of him, and perhaps in the boxes not many would guess. Lawyers are always wigged and gowned; and every profession is, on the most ridiculously inappropriate occasions, saddled with the badge which *now* it never shows but when compelled. This is the taste in externals. Fine

encouragement to hope to see manners accurately portrayed, when they cannot even copy dress!" The *Examiner* of a yet earlier generation than that of Arlington, would have accorded a ready assent to these strictures. But it was careful to distinguish between the several classes of dramatic composition, and to dispute the generally accepted notion that tragedy and comedy are equally direct imitations of human life. It argued that, on the contrary, the loftier persons of tragedy require an elevation of language and manner which they never use in real life. "Tragedy is an imitation of life in passions; it is comedy only which imitates both passions and habits." A tragic actor, on Leigh Hunt's showing, is to be estimated, not as he always copies nature, but as he satisfies the general opinion of life and manners: he must neither debase his dignity by too natural a simplicity of manner, nor give it a ridiculous elevation by pomposity and bombast. The chief qualification of a comedian is held to be instantaneous perception of everything that varies from the seriousness of human nature, but it must be a variation that is found in real life, or it becomes farcical; and it is in the nice differentiation of comedy from farce that the actor shows his judgment.* The tragic stage, on the same authority, is always a step above nature; for the imitation of tragedy, paradoxical as the phrase may seem, must be somewhat imperfect in its resemblance to real life in order to be pleasing. "Luckily for nature, indeed, our actors have little occasion to study this elevation above men and manners; for the poet has already lifted them sufficiently, either with his verse, or his declamation, or some other uncommonness of human language." The tragic performer, therefore, while

* "Though some writers of huge farces may call their productions comedy, yet the world invariably recognizes them for what they are, and would as soon look for its own image in their kind of satire, as a beauty would search for her likeness at the back of her looking-glass. For the same reason, therefore, the actor should confine his caricature to farce, otherwise he totally destroys that end of the poet which it is his business to promote. If the character too is extremely natural and well-drawn, he contradicts his own sentiments and deeds by farce," etc.—*Critical Essays* (by Leigh Hunt), 1807, p. 143. Cf. pp. 2—4, 58, 142 sq.

attending carefully to the poetry, ought still, the critic reminds him, to imitate nature as closely as possible in passages of emotion and passion, if it were merely to correct the artificial effect of the poet's writing, which is always presumably sufficient to give him the necessary elevation, and which, unless softened, would always be in danger of lifting him too abruptly above the standard of humanity. The supreme difficulty of an actor, says Mr. G. H. Lewes, is to represent ideal character with such truthfulness that it shall affect us as real, not to drag down ideal character to the vulgar level : his art is one of representation, not of illusion : he has to use natural expressions, but he must sublimate them ; the symbols must be such as we can sympathetically interpret, and for this purpose they must be the expression of real human feeling ; but just as the language is poetry, or choice prose, purified from the hesitancies, incoherences, and imperfections of careless daily speech, so must his utterance be musical and incisive—his manner typical and pictorial. "If the language depart too widely from the logic of passion and truthfulness, we call it bombast ; if the elevation of the actor's style be not sustained by natural feeling, we call it mouthing and rant ; and if the language fall below the passion, we call it prosaic and flat ; as we call the actor tame if he cannot present the character so as to interest us."* The most general error of authors, and of actors, Mr. Lewes holds to be turgidity rather than flatness ; the striving to be effective leads so easily into the error of exaggeration. But he exposes the not uncommon fallacy, that because exaggeration is a fault, tameness is a merit. Exaggeration is a fault because it is an untruth ; but in art, he cautions the artist, it is as easy to be untrue by falling below as by rising above naturalness.

Hamlet would have the fellow whipped for o'erdoing Ter-magant, who tears a passion to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings. "Pray you, avoid it," he enjoins the first player, whom he has no fancy to see out-herod Herod. The

* On Actors and the Art of Acting, by G. H. Lewes, pp. 112-113. ;

latter feat was rather too literally achieved by the performer of Herod, in the *Mariamne* of Mairet—an older poet than Corneille—the actor so topping his part that he roared himself to death. Smollett's critical chevalier is caustic at the cost of the English tragedian who acted the crafty, cool, designing Crookback as a loud, shallow, blustering Hector; who, in the character of the mild patriot Brutus, lost all temper and decorum; who represented the despair of an Othello by beating his own forehead and bellowing like a bull; and indeed performed such strange shakings of the head, and other antic gesticulations, that he seemed to be a sufferer from St. Vitus's dance. "In short, he seems to be a stranger to the more refined sensations of the soul, consequently his expression is of the vulgar kind, and he must often sink under the idea of the poet; so that he has recourse to such violence of affected agitation as imposes upon the undiscerning spectator, but to the eye of taste evinces him a mere player of that class whom your admired Shakspeare justly compares to Nature's journeyman tearing a passion to rags."* The "unmeaning rage of Mr. Pope" is a recurrent topic in Leigh Hunt's little volume of 1807, which harps on

* The Frenchman thus discourses by way of retort courteous on the preference avowed by Smollett's hero, "like a good Englishman," for the performers of his own country, who, he alleged, obeyed the genuine impulses of nature, in exhibiting the passions of the human mind, and entered so warmly into the spirit of their several parts, that they often fancied themselves the very persons they represented; whereas the action of the Parisian players, even in their most interesting characters, was generally such an extravagance in voice and gesture as is nowhere to be observed but on the stage.

When Voltaire was once instructing an actress in some tragic part, she objected, "But, sir, were I to play in this manner, they would say the devil was in me." "And so he ought to be, in a tragic actress," her instructor replied. Schlegel cites this against Voltaire, as betokening no very keen sense for that dignity and sweetness which in an ideal composition, "such as the French Tragedy pretends to be," ought never to be lost sight of, even in the wildest whirlwind of passion. Smollett's English spokesman returns to the charge, by telling the Frenchman that when first he "beheld your famous Parisian stage-heroine in one of her principal parts," her attitudes seemed so violent, and she tossed her arms round with such

that performer's "staring eye and thundering voice;" "his violent grief is the boisterous lamentation of a school-boy;" —we see him clenching his fist, sobbing, and striking his bosom every other minute; we hear more than enough of his 'vociferous declamation," and in the Appendix he is ironically set forth as the type of "A fine actor, one who makes a great noise; a tatterdemalion of passions; a claptrapper, one intended by nature for a town-crier." Such were the French actors satirized by Despaze in his *Épître à Midas* :

" Leur art n'est pas toujours conforme à la nature :
Ils prolongent leurs cris, outrent leurs sentiments,
Prétendent émouvoir pas des rugissements . . .
Vous prisez, avant tout, la vigueur des poumons ;
Vous criez au miracle ; et la foule ravie,"

—well we know what comes of it when the ears of the groundlings are split. The warm and passionate parts of a tragedy, said Addison, are always the most taking with the audience, and hence the players exaggerate into rant what was designed to be pronounced with calm. "I have seen Powell very often raise himself a loud clap by this artifice." A youthful actor is apt, as a later critic observes, to indulge himself in that vehement expression with which children always endeavour

extravagance, that she put him in mind of a windmill under the agitation of a hard gale; while her voice and features exhibited the liveliest representation of an English scold. "The action of your favourite male performer was, in my opinion, equally unnatural: he appeared with the affected airs of a dancing-master; at the most pathetic junctures of his fate he lifted up his hands above his head, like a tumbler going to vault, and spoke as if his throat had been obstructed by a hair-brush." But then national manners and temperaments differ, and the Englishman was here willing to make allowance for French proclivities. Molière, a hundred years previously, had done his best to write down and act down the fashion of *l'emphase déclamatoire*, and to assert the cause of nature against the schools. His Mascarille, in the *Précieuses*, makes game of those ignorant actors who recite as people talk; "Molière et sa troupe étaient de ceux-ci," a great critic remarks. But neither against mouthing artificiality of pompous declamation, nor against extravagance in robustious periwig-pated passion, has any authority, however classical, sufficed to guard, for all time, or for any length of time, the French or any other stage.

to supply the man: passions really existing moderate their violence by their own failure of power, but in imitation no such self-restraint is felt, and therefore in unskilful hands their violence is always carried beyond nature: thus children are inclined to caricature a passion, because they must supply the deficiency of feeling by a superfluity of action; everything becomes greater in the imitation than in the original; dignity is forced into haughtiness, indifference into contempt, and displeasure into rage. It was of a later Powell than Addison's that Garrick wrote from abroad, deprecating so promising an actor's choice of "that detestable part of Alexander. Every genius must despise it, because that, and such fustian-like stuff, is the bane of true merit. If a man can act it well, I mean to please the people, he has something in him that a good actor should not have. . . . I hate your roarers." This was written to the elder Colman. To Powell himself Garrick wrote: "Guard against splitting the ears of the groundlings,—do not sacrifice your taste and feelings to the applause of the multitude; a true genius will convert an audience to his manner, rather than be converted by them to what is false and unnatural." Not being a true genius, this presumed and perhaps presuming rival of Garrick, of whom Garrick is even alleged to have been pitifully jealous, had neither the will nor the power to convert and refine the groundlings. What he might have become, in riper years,—he died in his thirty-second, of a raging fever,—is open to question, and so to the conjecture of charitable construction; but appearances were against him, and the chances ran that he would have to be finally classed, not with David his master, but with those who cultivate what Pope's censor accounted *his* infallible method of obtaining a clap from the galleries—(for extremes meet, and the gallery gods of one age answer to the groundlings of another;) which trick consisted in gradually raising the voice as the speech drew to a conclusion, making an alarming outcry on the last four or five lines, and with a vigorous jerk of the right arm rushing off the stage. "All this astonishes the galleries; they are persuaded it must be something very fine, because it is so unintelligible; and they clap for the sake of

their own reputation." Garrick in Hamlet was caviare to the general, if we may take Partridge in the gallery as their spokesman: his was not acting, but nature; and the galleries wanted acting for their hard cash, and the ranter who mouthed Claudius was the man for their money. Mr. Lewes, however, shrewdly takes exception to what has commonly been held to be a dexterous and delicate compliment on Fielding's part to Garrick's acting. "I cannot say what truth there was in Partridge's appreciation of Garrick, but if his language is to be interpreted as Fielding seems to imply, the intended compliment is a sarcasm." For Partridge declares that, had *he* seen a ghost, he should have looked in the very same manner as the little man looked, and done just as the little man did. But could Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, have felt and exhibited the vulgar terror of a vulgar nature? The manner of a frightened Partridge can never, Mr. Lewes contends, have been at all like the manner of Hamlet; and Fielding "made a great mistake in assimilating the representation of Garrick to the nature of a serving-man." Garrick, on this assumption, in his fear of being stilted, relapsed into vulgarity; he tried to be natural without duly considering the kind of nature that was to be represented. But there is not much difficulty in saving Garrick's credit, and Fielding's, and Partridge's too, by the conclusion that "wee Davy's" acting of the affrighted prince may have been prince-like, though so intensely natural, and so naturally intense.

The ninth chapter of the essays *On Actors and the Art of Acting* is devoted to Shakspeare as Actor and Critic. The opening paragraph assumes him to have been an indifferent actor, but goes on to assert that if a doubt is permissible on this point, there is none respecting his mastery as a critic of acting: he may not have been a brilliant executant; but his advice to the players in *Hamlet* proves him to have been a penetrating and reflective connoisseur. The closing paragraph winds up an exposition of the cardinal directions in that scene, with a reference to the minor one, of avoiding "gag;" and to this, allusion is made merely to show how

complete is Shakspeare's advice to the players, and how seriously he had considered the whole subject of acting. Most pitiful ambition, villanous even, Hamlet (and therefore Shakspeare) reckoned the endeavour of the stage buffoon to challenge unseasonable attention to his buffoonery, and to mar the method of the play for his own base ends. Let all such technical "gag" be gagged absolutely and resolutely. Let your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; or else be themselves set down, in the way most peremptory and effectual. Let Tarleton play his part, not play off himself. Let the comic man be comic to his uttermost, within his line of character, but not outside of it, or apart from it, perhaps in contradiction to it. Let him, fool as he is, respect his author, respect his audience, and even respect himself. Talfourd qualified his admiration for Liston by the admission that his humour was sometimes "lavished on questionable irregularities;" and of Liston as well as Edwin was Mr. Boaden thinking, when he described Weston's face as one that "no earthly being could see without being thrown into convulsive fits of laughter"—a result, submits the grave biographer of the Kembles, in reality little flattering to the actor, it being natural distortion or pure grimace, features below the standard of just expression, or gestures silly and even indecent, that for the most part excite it. "A proper estimate of the art itself, or a rational self-esteem, should equally lead a man to disdain what a mere trick can acquire, and the exhibition of personal debasement usually provokes." We are told of the Adelphi audiences who flocked to see John Reeve and his successor Wright, that they went prepared to tolerate any extravagances these two chartered libertines might be pleased to perpetrate.* Either of them

* A critic in the *Cornhill Magazine*, writing of John Edwin, assumes our ancestors, down to a time as late as our grandfathers, to have tolerated liberties taken with an audience by actors with a leniency not to be found in more recent times—a leniency the more surprising, as the manners of the age were ruder, and the customs of a very ruffianly character. For instance, Edwin was playing Bowkit in the *Son-in-law* at the Haymarket; and in the scene where Cranky declines to accept him as a son-in-law on

was free, and made free, to take whatever liberties he liked. "His interpolations might run directly counter to the spirit of the piece in which he acted, his dress might be as foreign to the fashion of every age or country as the habiliment of the clown—no matter, the talk was funny, so the public was delighted. A wink on his first entrance had established an *entente cordiale* for the evening, and on the strength of this he might clothe himself with any frippery, or talk any amount of nonsense—the more the better." And the better the worse; the worse for himself, and the worse for his public.

Foote was noted for the "theatrical selfishness" with which he would never "give or take," never once thinking of his fellows when in presence of the audience, but trying to engross all the applause and attention,—always turning his full face to the audience, and never, says Mr. Fitzgerald, addressing his brethren.* The actor knows that there is an audience present; but if he act as though he knew it, he acts badly,—the observation is John Stuart Mill's.

Professor Morley once said of Mr. Keeley, that it would certainly be difficult to name an actor, from the stage past or then (1853) present, whose comic efforts were so natural and unstrained; this veteran actor's touch being so easy that under it extravagance itself lost the air of unreality.

account of his ugliness, he uttered the word "ugly?" in a tone of astonishment, and then advancing to the footlights, said with his own uttermost and unmatchable impudence, "Now I put it to the decision of an enlightened British public which is the *ugliest* fellow of the *three*—I, old Cranky here, or that gentleman in the front row of the balcony box?" The gentleman in question became the object, not of general and indignant sympathy, but of general and obstreperous derision, and he retreated in haste from the "humiliating consequences of the actor's impertinence."—But there are stories told of Reeve and Wright that differ only in degree, not kind, from this unpardonable foolhardiness.

* Contrast with this what Mr. Raymond records of Elliston, that he was what is known in stage society as a "fair actor"—never appropriating the scenic effects of others, but always playing in such a manner as might best bring out the professional powers of those around him. Hence his popularity among his fellow-players.

"He never grimaces, he never winks at the audience, he never takes anybody but himself into his confidence,—yet what a never-tiring figure of fun he is, how unconscious he seems of the laughter he provokes, and what a solidity he appears to give to the most trivial expressions!" Charles Lamb, indeed, in an essay on Stage Illusion, made it a moot-point whether in certain characters in comedy, especially those which are a little extravagant, it is not a proof of the highest skill in the comedian when, without absolutely appealing to an audience, he keeps up a tacit understanding with them; and makes them, unconsciously to themselves, a party in the scene.* But Elia would have been one of the last to sanction, or even tolerate, the destruction of all stage illusion involved in the pitiful ambition of some comedians, who respect neither themselves, nor their part, nor their fellow-actors, nor the audience at large, but take impertinent liberties with all, and are sometimes applauded all the more. Boileau's canon of art, *Aux dépens du bon sens gardez de plaisanter*, was never of authority with these unseasonable and unreasonable jesters, true neither to nature nor to art.

§ II.

THE PLAY'S THE THING.

Hamlet, Acts ii. and iii.

HAPPY thought, Hamlet deems it,—the play's the thing, wherein he'll catch the conscience of the king. For he has heard

"That guilty creatures, sitting at a play,
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions;

* "The utmost nicety is required in the mode of doing this; but we speak only of the great artists in the profession."—*Essays of Elia*: "On Stage Illusion."

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ."

So Hamlet would have these players play something like the murder of his father, before his uncle Claudius, whose looks he would scrutinize the while. "I'll tent him to the quick ; if he do blench, I know my course." Hamlet's one trusty and trusted friend, Horatio, is taken into his confidence, and desired to aid in the watch :

"There is a play to-night before the king ;
One scene of it comes near the circumstance,
Which I have told thee, of my father's death.
I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act afoot,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle Give him heedful note ;
For I mine eyes will rivet to his face ;
And after, we will both our judgments join
In censure of his seeming,"

or opinion of his demeanour. And the scene of the play thus performed is by Tieck pronounced to be one of the most striking in the piece. The king has again collected his energies ; if he is still troubled, he is able at least to conceal it in the presence of the court ; he talks in a friendly manner to Hamlet, and jests with the queen, or with the other ladies and nobles ; so occupied indeed is he with merriment and conversation, that he pays no attention to the pantomimic action, in which, according to the custom of the old English theatre, all the coming incidents of the play were shadowed forth. But Hamlet's repeated hints at last awaken his attention. "Since Hamlet cannot control his emotion, he [Claudius] feels there must be something of importance in the piece, something which in some way bears upon himself. When the poisoner enters, when the brother is murdered, even as *he* had murdered his own, —when he sees this, and cannot doubt at the same time that his crime is no longer a secret, then conscience out-breaks through all his hypocrisy ; he flies in terror as from before a spectre." The development, the awful preparation for this event, and yet its sudden and striking arrival, must, adds Tieck, if well represented, give an extraordinary

interest to the scene, and render the king unquestionably the chief object of interest.*

Adam Smith metaphysically moralizes on the fact, that men of the most detestable characters, who, in the execution of the most dreadful crimes, had taken their measures so coolly as to avoid even the suspicion of guilt, have sometimes been driven, by the horror of their situation, to discover, of their own accord, what no human sagacity could have ever tracked out. So with the wicked as portrayed by the Psalmist, who imagine wickedness, and practise it, and keep it secret, every man in the deep of his heart, yet whose own tongues shall make them fall, "and all men that see it shall say, This hath God done; for they shall perceive that it is His work." Zeluco's guilt is self-betrayed as he gazes on a picture of the Massacre of the Innocents.† The Duke, in James Shirley's tragedy of *The Traitor*, is plotted against by means of a masque that shall confound him, just as Hamlet contrives a play as the thing to catch the conscience of the king. The grand situation of the piece called *Narciss*, by Brachvogel,‡ is the performance at one of the salons at Versailles, of a play, the plot of which has been contrived to bear a close analogy to the early history of Madame de Pompadour, as recently revealed, with Narciss to represent her deserted husband,—Madame herself being the principal spectator, and the main object of interest throughout.

Charles de Bernard's readers may perhaps remember his Marillac looking at Bergenheim and Gerfaut with a strange smile, and murmuring as if to himself about a very original,

* Dramaturgische Blätter, i. 68 sq.

† Tenderer-hearted was that parricidal caliph, Mostanser, whom Gibbon describes as surprised into tears "at the sight of an old tapestry which represented the crime and punishment of the son of Chosroes," and whose days are said to have been abridged by grief and remorse.

‡ Of whom it has been remarked that, like Heinrich Laube, and with even a slighter feeling for accuracy, he loves to put on the stage the realities of the past; and who has found Sebastian Bach a fitting subject for a drama. Narciss is Diderot's scampish nephew of Rameau Germanized.

an excessively original idea that had struck him : " C'est une idée à conserver pour ma première pièce, une scène dans le genre de celle des comédiens dans *Hamlet*. Pourvu que je ne sois pas tellement vrai qu'il se reconnaisse et se mette à crier comme Claudius ; *Lights ! Lights !* * des flambeaux en plein midi ! "

John Galt's readers, again, may recall perhaps Andrew Wylie's plan for getting up " a hypothetical story," winding up with some " supposed meeting by accident, under cloud of night, in a lonely forest, nobody near, nor eye to see, but only the stars of heaven: Do this, and we'll see what effect it has on Sir Hubert." The next chapter breaks off suddenly and significantly with the exclamation of the judge from the bench,—“Look to Sir Hubert Mowbray,”—a melodramatic stroke, of main import in the working of the plot. Scott instances in *Bertram*

“ The power within the guilty breast,
Oft vanquish'd, never quite suppress'd,
That unsubdued and lurking lies,
To take the felon by surprise,
And force him, as by magic spell,
In his despite his guilt to tell.”

§ III.

THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY.

Hamlet, Act iii., Sc. 2.

IN his philosophical dissertation on the Theory of Greek Tragedy, Mr. de Quincey devoted a page or two of suggestive criticism to the cases occasionally occurring in the English drama and the Spanish, where a play is exhibited within a play. “ To go no further,” he said, “ every person remembers the remarkable instance of this in *Hamlet*.” Sometimes the

* For thus are printed in the French the “ Lights ! lights ! ” demanded by Shakspeare's conscience-stricken king.

same thing, he went on to remark, takes place in painting: we see a chamber, suppose, exhibited by the artist, on the walls of which (as a customary piece of furniture) hangs a picture; and as this picture again might represent a room furnished with pictures, in the mere logical possibilities of the case we might imagine this descent into a life below a life going on *ad infinitum*. Practically, however, the process is soon stopped, a retrocession of this nature being difficult to manage. "The original picture is a mimic, an unreal life. But this unreal life is itself a real life with respect to the secondary picture; which again must be supposed realized with relation to the tertiary picture, if such a thing were attempted." Hence, at every step of the "introvolution," something must be done to differentiate the gradations, and to express the subordinations of life; because each term in the descending series, being first of all a mode of non-reality to the spectator, is next to assume the functions of a real life in its relations to the next lower or interior term of the series. We are reminded that in Shakspeare's instance the problem before him was of his own devising; the difficulty was of his own making. It was, "So to differentiate a drama that it might stand within a drama, precisely as a painter places a picture within a picture; and therefore that the secondary or inner drama should be non-realized upon a scale that would throw, by comparison, a reflex colouring of reality upon the principal drama." This being the problem, the secret or law of the process by which Shakspeare solved it is explained to have been this—to swell, tumefy, stiffen, not the diction only, but the tenor of the thought; in fact, to stilt it, and to give it a prominence and an ambition beyond the scale which he adopted for his ordinary life. Almost of course, therefore, it is in rhyme—"an artifice which Shakspeare employs with great effect on other similar occasions (that is, occasions when he wished to solemnize or in any way differentiate the life;)" and then again it is condensed and massed as respects the flowing of the thoughts; it is "rough and horrent with figures in strong relief, like the embossed gold of an ancient vase; and the movement of the scene is conducted in short gyra-

tions—so unlike the free sweep and expansion of his general developments.” Noticing, only to reject, the notion of some commentators, that Shakspeare here intended to ridicule the tragic bombast of his contemporaries, A. W. Schlegel argues that to distinguish the players’ declamation, as dramatic poetry, from the play of *Hamlet* itself, it was necessary to raise it above the dignified poetry of the play, in the same proportion that the theatrical elevation of the rest does above simple nature. “Hence Shakspeare has composed the play in *Hamlet* altogether in sententious rhymes, full of antitheses.” But inasmuch as this solemn and measured tone did not suit a speech in which violent emotions ought to prevail—the Hecuba speech, to wit—the poet had no other expedient than the one of which he made choice—overcharging the pathos. “The language of the speech in question is beyond doubt falsely emphatical; but so mixed up is this fault with true grandeur, that a player, practised in exciting within himself artificially the imitated emotions, may certainly be carried away by it.” Barante admires as *du plus grand effet* the “representation dramatique,” whereby Hamlet designs to catch the conscience of the king; and as to its semblance of exaggeration, and quasi-parody or travestie, the French critic observes, to the same effect as Schlegel and De Quincey, that “pour établir que c’était une représentation, et la distinguer entièrement de l’action principale, il fallait lui donner un tout autre ton. C’est ce qui explique l’emploi des vers rimés et la pompe outrée du langage.” Still more remarkable than Shakspeare’s principle and practice of interspersing prose scenes, or even prose speeches, in his dramas, wherever the nature of his subject-matter requires it, are what Mr. W. C. Roscoe calls the subtle variations in the rhythm and in the warmth of the imaginative colouring, answering everywhere in the nicest correspondence to the level of his theme. It is an observation in general of Hartley Coleridge’s that the poetry introduced as such by Shakspeare is seldom better than doggrel. A poem in a poem, a play in a play, a picture in a picture, the imitation of flageolet or trumpet in pianoforte music, are all, said Hartley, departures from

legitimate art; and yet how frequent in our old drama was the introduction of play within play,—sometimes, as in *Bartholomew Fair*, the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the *Taming of the Shrew*, and others, the main performance is as it were double-dramatized; but more frequently the episodic drama is more or less subservient to the plot, as in *Hamlet*, *The Roman Actor*, etc.; or purely burlesque, as in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In his notes on *Macbeth*, Coleridge remarks that the style and rhythm of the bleeding soldier's speeches in the second scene should be illustrated by reference to the interlude in *Hamlet*, in which the epic is substituted for the tragic, in order to make the latter be felt as the real-life diction. And in his notes on the interlude in question, or the play within the play, he calls particular attention to the "admirable substitution of the epic for the dramatic," which gives such a reality to the impassioned dramatic diction of Shakspeare's own dialogue, and is authorized too by the actual style of the tragedies before his time—*Porrex and Ferrex*, etc. "The fancy, that a burlesque was intended, sinks below criticism: the lines, as epic narrative, are superb." In the thoughts, he goes on to say, and even in the separate parts of the diction, the description is highly poetical; in truth, taken by itself, it has the fault of being too poetical—the language of lyric vehemence and epic pomp, and not of the drama. But if Shakspeare had made the diction truly dramatic, where, Coleridge asks, would have been the contrast between *Hamlet* and the play in *Hamlet*?

§ IV.

STAGE TEARS FOR HECUBA.

Hamlet, Act ii., Sc. 2.

THE player that took the leading part among the company favoured by Hamlet, was already favourably known to the prince as a master of stage elocution. Hamlet once heard

him recite a telling speech in a play that pleased not the million, "'twas caviare to the general," but "an excellent play" for all that; and this speech it was that Hamlet "chiefly loved,"—Æneas the speaker of it, in Dido's hearing, and the subject the slaughter of Priam. Fain would Hamlet hear that speech declaimed once again; and himself gave the player the cue, by reciting the opening lines of it with, by the verdict of Polonius, good accent and good discretion. But the player brought something else to bear on *his* delivery of the speech. Tears were at his command, and he shed them. The player could work himself up to weep for Hecuba. And when the recital was over, and Hamlet was again alone, after this sort he upbraided himself on the score of that high-wrought emotion, of those visible, tangible, undeniable stage tears for Hecuba:

"O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working, all his visage wann'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears."

One thinks of Rosalind's affected counterfeit, and of Beatrice's alleged one. Of the former, says Oliver, "This was not counterfeit; there is too great testimony in your complexion, that it was a passion of earnest;" notwithstanding which objection, the lady persists in pleading "Counterfeit, I assure you." Of Beatrice's surmised counterfeit, as suggested by Don Pedro, and deemed likely by Claudio, the lady's uncle protests, "O God! counterfeit! There never was counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion, as she discovers it." But more to the purpose is the strain of another of Shakspeare's ladies, the disguised Julia, when recounting a memorable experience in private theatricals:

"For I did play a lamentable part :
 Madam, 'twas Ariadne, passioning
 For Theseus' perjury, and unjust flight ;
 Which I so lively acted with my tears,
 That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,
 Wept bitterly." *

* *Si vis me flere, dolendum est Primum tibi.* Given real tears from the actor, there will be no lack of them among the spectators.

Weeping for Hecuba, and thereby making beholders weep too, is what the player did whom Plutarch signalizes in his account of Alexander of Pheræ. That tyrant hurried out of the theatre once, while the *Troades* of Euripides was being acted, a great tragedian in the chief part ; and to him came this royal message, that he was not to take the royal exit as a slight, for in point of fact it was undesignedly the greatest of compliments. Alexander was overcome by the pathos of the actor, and he hastened away because he was "ashamed that his citizens should see him, who never pitied those he put to death, weep at the sufferings of Hecuba and Andromache." It is to him that Pope alludes in his Prologue to Addison's *Cato*—

"Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
 And foes to virtue wonder'd why they wept."

Unfortunately, Alexander Pheræus, as it is remarked in the *Caxtoniana*, despite his weeping, kept his nature, which was probably not constitutionally "savage." A man of a temper readily impressionable, if accompanied, as it generally is, with a lively fancy, brings home to himself the sorrows or the dangers which are represented to his senses, and for the moment realized by his fancy ; and thus it may be from fear for himself that a tyrant may weep at the representation of sufferings which, on the stage, depicts the power of Fate over even the crowned head and the sceptred hand.

Cardinal Richelieu was moved to tears by the *Mariamne* of Tristan (imitated from Calderon's *Tetrarca de Jerusalem*), and the actor who played Herod was all but entirely overcome by his own emotion. Lewis the Fifteenth stamped the reputation of Le Kain by saying of him, "Il m'a fait pleurer ; moi qui ne pleure guère." Voltaire tells how the great Condé shed tears at the last scene of Corneille's *Cinna*. Voltaire's niece, vulgar, ugly, insipid Madame Denis, wrote a comedy, but the players, out of respect for her uncle, declined to act in it ; she wrote a tragedy, but the one favour she could never wring from Voltaire was that he should read it : yet as an actress—for she had histrionic ambition, as well as dramatic—she worked a miracle in drawing floods of tears from some English ladies by her representation of Mérope.

Dr. Beattie was rather proud of the tears he so freely shed at the acting of Mrs. Siddons ; and more than a little proud the good man was when his violoncello playing of old Scotch airs gave him his revenge, by drawing

The popular notion that the actor really feels what he expresses, is combated by Mr. G. H. Lewes as contradicted by experience. Not only, he argues, is it notorious that the actor is feigning, and that if he really felt what he feigns he would be unable to withstand the wear and tear of such

as many tears from her as she had drawn from him. A proudly pleased woman—young woman then—was Miss Hannah More when she marked the tears of men as well as women at her tragedy of *Percy*: "One tear is worth a thousand hands, and I had the satisfaction to see even the men shed them in abundance." Two or three years later she has a little anecdote to tell on the same subject: "A lady observing to one of her maid-servants, when she came in from the play, that her eyes looked red, as if she had been crying, the girl, by way of apology, said, Well, ma'am, if I did, it was no harm: a great many respectable people cried too." Another ten years, and we come upon this passage again in one of the lady's letters describing a dinner at Sir Joshua Reynolds', with Burke and other celebrities for her fellow-guests: "They cried all at once, 'Were you not delighted with Mrs. Siddons last night in *Percy*?' I replied, 'No! for I did not see her.' They would not believe me guilty of such insensibility, adding, 'She did it exquisitely, as the tears of Mr. Fox, who sat with us, testified.'" Scott has left on record his inability to check his tears at her Belvidera. "I saw a brigadier-general cry like a child at her Indiana," Mr. Charles Reade makes Colley Cibber say of Mrs. Oldfield. "Mrs. Cibber always makes me cry," quoth Quin, albeit constitutionally unused to the melting mood.

Boswell's readers always have laughed, and always will, at Johnson's picture of "Doddy" going to the play night after night to cry at the distress of poor Cleone. But then Dodsley was the author of *Cleone*; and a fellow-feeling of that paternal sort makes one wondrous kind and soft-hearted.

Walter Savage Landor told Southey in 1811 that he had not seen a play acted a dozen times in his life,—one main reason being, said he, that "I cannot restrain my tears, sometimes at even an indifferent piece." It was a real triumph for Elliston, as Schedoni, to draw tears from George Steevens. Quite as real perhaps was the triumph of Digges, when, as Cardinal Wolsey, he, in Colman's phrase, "drew tears even from the eyes of flinty-hearted critics." There are critics and critics, and a George Steevens has little in common with a Richard Steele, who, as Thackeray says of him, must have been invaluable at a tragedy, and have cried as much as the most tender young lady in the boxes.

For upwards of four years had Charles Lloyd—the honoured and endeared friend of Lamb, of Southey, of De Quincey—been afflicted with a most trying malady, a torpor of feeling, and, as it were, a numbness of

emotion repeated night after night ; but it is indisputable, to those who know anything of art, that the mere presence of genuine emotion would be such a disturbance of the intellectual equilibrium as entirely to frustrate artistic expression. -And to the question, How far does the actor feel ? (for he cannot act unless he feel,) the answer offered is something like this : He is in a state of emotional excitement sufficiently strong to furnish him with the elements of expression, but not strong enough to disturb his consciousness of the fact that he is only imagining—sufficiently strong to give the requisite tone to his voice and aspect to his features, but

his faculties, which no medical art had availed to dispel or even to relax. He was impenetrable to the blandishments of affection, and the fountain of tears had for all that length of time been a fountain sealed. But, “by some inexplicable chance,” he strayed one night into the pit of Covent Garden Theatre, and the acting of Macready re-opened at once for him the sacred source of sympathetic tears. “The rock was struck, and the gushing stream was a new spring of life to him.” In more than one sonnet gratefully addressed by him to the actor he avowed this.

“Whence is that unaccustom’d gush, which steals
From eyes that so long in their sockets burn’d ?
Whence, that a ‘heart as dry as dust’ now feels
That for which fruitlessly it long hath yearn’d ?

* * * *

This potent spell was sped in its deep aim
By transcendental powers ; and thus I wept
Tears, healing, yet impassion’d ; of whose name
Alone for years the memory I had kept.”

Madame Guizot (Pauline de Meulan) makes this incidental avowal : “Je n’avais pu supporter le finale de *Roméo et Juliette* ; celui de *l’Agnese* seul m’a fait pleurer sans me déchirer le cœur.” Hazlitt, at the Salle Louvois in 1824, rebuked three Frenchmen for laughing at a girl who cried bitterly at the sorrows of Nina in *La Gazza Ladra*. Tom Moore, in the same year, wept copiously over *Clari* at Covent Garden—“cried at it as much as I used in Paris,” he writes in his Diary. Miss Mitford, on the other hand, bears this unabashed record of herself, even in her young days : “I never cry at a play ; though few people, I believe, enter more warmly into its beauties.” But she dearly loved to see other folks crying at a play of hers. At *Foscari*, for example, in 1826 : “Mrs. Trollope, between joy for my triumph and sympathy with the play, has cried herself half blind.” “I assure you that during two acts the white handkerchief is going continually, to my great astonishment.” It was in reference to Dr. Price and the dethronement of Lewis the Sixteenth that Burke avowed

not strong enough to prevent his modulating the one and arranging the other according to a preconceived standard.*

That actors sympathise with the feelings they represent, has been more or less flatly denied by some critics of no slight name and influence—a Diderot, a Johnson, and, in virtue of his Miss Costigan may perhaps be added, a Thackeray. Diderot wrote an essay to prove that perfect self-possession and cold insensibility to the emotions which he has to express are essential to a great actor. Such an actor, he says, is the same in every representation, and always equally perfect: all is prepared, all is learnt by heart; his passion has its beginning, its middle, and its end,—the same accents, the same positions, the same gestures are repeated. "You ask me whether these plaintive tones, these half-stifled sobs, in which a despairing mother seems to pour forth her inmost soul, can be the result of no real emotion? Unquestionably, I answer; and the proof is, that they form part of

what tears such a spectacle would draw from *him*, if exhibited on the stage. But he should be truly ashamed, he said, of finding in himself that "superficial theatric sense of painted distress," while he could, with Dr. Price, exult over it in real life. "With such a perverted mind, I could never venture to show my face at a tragedy. People would think the tears that Garrick formerly, or that Siddons not long since, have extorted from me, were the tears of hypocrisy; I should know them to be the tears of folly." The anonymous author of a thoughtful essay on Social Stoicism discusses the question whether a man who goes to the play, and feels inclined to cry, ought to do it or not. And the conclusion is, that if he cannot help it, there is probably no great harm done; but that, generally speaking, he had better not, on the broad ground that to allow any emotion whatever to have its way, without contest, is to abdicate self-command to that extent; and this abdication is so seductive, and the task of self-government so laborious, that the one should be resisted and the other practised, whatever may be the shapes under which they present themselves.

* "Actors learn their parts as singers learn their songs. Every detail is deliberative, or has been deliberated. The very separation of Art from Nature involves this calculation. The sudden flash of suggestion which is called inspiration may be valuable, it may be worthless: the artistic intellect estimates the value, and adopts or rejects it accordingly.—Trusting to the inspiration of the moment is like trusting to a shipwreck for your first lesson in swimming."—Lewes, *On Actors and the Art of Acting*, p. 106.

a system of declamation—that they have been elaborated by long study—that to be properly uttered they have been repeated a hundred times—that every time the actor listened to his own voice—that he is listening to it now—and that his skill consists, not in feeling an emotion, but in imitating its external signs.” Those screams of grief, adds Diderot, are noted in his memory; those gestures of despair have been laboriously prepared: the actor has fixed in his own mind the precise time when he is to weep: the trembling voice, the half-uttered, half-stifled words, the quivering limbs—it is all a sheer matter of memory, a lesson carefully learnt and accurately repeated; a sublime deception, which the actor knows to be a deception while he is executing it; a performance which wearies his body, but does not disturb his mind.

The best way, as Leigh Hunt suggested, to solve the difficulty is to apply to an actor himself. But then it ought to be a great actor; one who has at his command the tears of the critical, as well as his own. At the root of the genius of great actors, no less than of great poets, as Mr. Theodore Martin has consistently and persistently urged, lies intense sensibility: things which other men take coldly, will send thrills of exquisite pain or pleasure along their nerves, and the strain on their emotions leaves traces of exhaustion little less than would be caused by real troubles;—but this is the very condition of their excellence. “If it was not for the stage,” wrote Mrs. Cibber, that great mistress of pathos, to Garrick, a few months before her death, “I could wish, with Lady Townshend, that my nerves were made of cart-ropes.” So, when we read of what Garrick was upon the stage—of the colour that visibly came and went upon his cheek with the shifting passions of the scene—of the features that in every line became the reflex of the inward emotion—of the voice, whose very character would change to fit the part he was playing,—we may be sure that such qualities implied great physical exhaustion, and great inroads upon health.* This was hardly the man to whom to say, as Dr.

* *Quarterly Review*, July, 1868.

Johnson pooh-poohingly said, "Punch has no feelings." To Leigh Hunt it seemed plain that the countenance cannot express a single passion perfectly, unless the passion is first felt; it is easy enough, said he, to grin representations of joy, and to pull down the muscles of the countenance as an imitation of sorrow,* but a keen observer of human nature and its effects will easily detect the cheat; there are nerves and muscles requisite to expression, that will not answer the will on common occasions; but to represent a passion with truth, every nerve and muscle should be in its proper action, or the representation becomes weak and confused—melancholy is mistaken for grief, and pleasure for delight; and from this feebleness of nature it is that "so many dull actors endeavour to supply passion with vehemence of action and voice, as jugglers are talkative and bustling to beguile scrutiny." They tell us of Betterton in *Hamlet*, that, ruddy as his complexion was, he turned as white as a sheet at the coming of the Ghost, and could not have trembled more violently had the apparition been real. Indeed, when Booth undertook the part of the Ghost, Betterton's looks at him struck him with so high a degree of horror, that he lost his head, and could not speak his part. Universal history and miscellaneous biography are rife with instances more or less to the purpose. There is Plutarch's mention of *Æsopus*, in the part of *Atreus*, so overwrought by personated passion that with his sceptre he struck a menial who chanced to be passing, and laid him dead at his feet. There is *Quin-*

* Or, say, to manipulate a stage tear after the fashion amusingly described by Mr. Dallas. Using the appropriate language, the actor works his features a little till he gets a tear into his eye, or imagines that one is there: he then takes out his handkerchief and wipes his wet cheek; or if his weeping should not be copious enough for such a performance, he lifts his middle finger, brushes with it the corner of his eye, and then looks at the slight moisture on the tip of his finger with a semblance of pleased astonishment: "A tear!" he says, "I thought that tears had left me for ever." See the chapter on Mixed Pleasure in the second volume of that treatise by Mr. Dallas on the science of criticism, of which we have long since been impatient to see volumes three and four, let alone five and six.

tilian's report of players he had seen so veritably concerned in a mournful part, that they could not give over weeping after coming home even. For it is not every actor or actress that can say with Mistress Oldfield, in the matter of Art, that reality begins for them at once with the fall of the curtain, and that they wipe off their profound sensibility along with their rouge, and whiting, and beauty-spots. But the sensibility must be there for a time, whatever becomes of it, or however it is disposed of. An Adrienne Lecouvreur must be able to say, "Ah! tout ce qu'il y a dans le cœur. . . j'ai tout deviné, tout souffert. Je puis tout exprimer maintenant." When Marmontel told Voltaire at Ferney of the Pompadour's decline at court and of her supreme unhappiness, the patriarch was for having her as his guest, to take leading parts in tragedy at his private theatricals, for she must be an adept in *le jeu des passions*, and an expert in "les profondes douleurs et les larmes. Tant mieux, c'est là ce qu'il il nous faut." And Voltaire was exacting in this respect, as the first authority in a nation of born actors, whose superiority to the English in tragedy Lady Mary Wortley had emphatically asserted: "I think our best actors can be only said to speak, but these to feel."

Bond was getting to be old when he played Lusignan in Voltaire's *Zaïre*, and felt the part so feelingly that the heroine, when she addressed him, found him dead in his chair.* Montfleury died of the emotions he could not restrain in playing the Orestes of Racine: he had not mastered Talma's paradox—that the actor must possess the power of strong feeling, or he can never command and carry with him the sympathy of a mixed audience in a crowded theatre; but he must, at the same time, control his sensations on the stage, for the indulgence of them uncontrolled will enfeeble execution. Charles Young is held to have merited severe censure when he sobbed aloud at the pathetic voice and

* So again, Palmer, who died on the stage, would seem to have been overcome by an agitated appeal to the feelings, acting fatally on a frame one may presume to have been organically diseased.

gesture of Mrs. Siddons, and was only recalled to a sense of his responsibilities, as the villain of the piece, by the stern admonition of the great actress, uttered in a thrilling whisper—"Mr. Young, command yourself!" Talma himself as a boy had learnt the need of such a lesson; for at a school-rehearsal of the old tragedy of *Simois*, so deeply did he enter into the feelings of his character, that he burst into tears which choked his utterance.

"When fancied sorrows wake the player's art,
A short-lived anguish seizes on the heart:
Tears, real tears he sheds; feels real pain,"—

so begins the Prologue written by the elder Colman and recited by Holland at the benefit performance for the family of Powell—and of which Holland wrote to the author, "I have shed more tears over it than ever I shed over any part in my life." Of Powell himself we are told by Charles Dibdin, "He felt so forcibly that in any impassioned scene tears came faster than words, and frequently choked his utterance." Mrs. Cibber is said, in pathetic parts, to have shed genuine tears, and her agitation turned her face pale even through the rouge. Quin affected the audience by shedding real tears when delivering the Prologue (*in memoriam*) to Thomson's *Coriolanus*. Mrs. Barry used to declare that she never, in the part of Otway's Monimia, uttered the words, "Ah, poor Castalio!" without weeping; and Gildon, in his *Life of Betterton*, remarks how frequently he had occasion to note the emotion obviously excited in her by passages in other parts. Worthy to be signaled, though left unnamed, by Pellisson and D'Olivet, was that young actor who played *un amant affligé*, and who being *amant affligé* himself, outdid Roscius and Æsop and Mondory, "et après avoir pleuré le premier, fit pleurer toute l'assemblée." But why claim for him on this account the glory of having surpassed the unsurpassable actors of the old world, and of the histrionic pride of France under Lewis the Thirteenth? To outdo Roscius and Æsop and Mondory may be suggestive of out-Heroding Herod, so far as that phrase implies a *quid nimis* transgression of the *jam satis*.

Campbell essayed—or rather declined; as too much for him—the attempt “in words to paint the memory of Kemble and of Lear ;

But who forgets that white discrowned head,
Those bursts of Reason’s half-extinguish’d glare,
Those tears upon Cordelia’s bosom shed,
In doubt more touching than despair
If ’twas reality he felt ?”

Miss Kelly, recalling her own Prince Arthur, told Mr. Crabb Robinson that when, as Constance, Mrs. Siddons wept over her, her collar was wet with Mrs. Siddons’ tears. Miss O’Neil, we learn on other authority, “would shed real, scalding tears, and sob out words that came really from the heart.” Mr. Nassau Senior bore witness, in the *Edinburgh Review*, to the real tears he saw running down Jenny Lind’s cheeks, as she pulled to pieces the violets in the *Sonnambula*. Mr. Planché mentions in his account of the acting in his play of *The Bravo*, in November 1834, that Mrs. Charles Kean (then Miss Ellen Tree), in the scene wherein the sister of the hero supplicates the Doge of Venice to save her brother, pleaded with a natural earnestness that not only deeply affected the whole house, but drew tears from the eyes of that “excellent actor,” Richard Younge, who played the Doge, and who declared to the author afterwards that he did not think he could have been more moved had the situation been real instead of imaginary.

The veteran author of *Musical Recollections* (1872) protests that still in his mind’s eye can he see Miss O’Neil as Belvidera, in “her last great mad scene,” in which every one of the other performers upon the stage stood weeping like children, wholly forgetful of their business.

Mr. Greville in his Journal (Feb. 27, 1830,) mentions what he heard from Charles Kemble about his daughter Fanny, and her stage success—the conversation occurring at dinner at Lord Lansdowne’s; with Moore, Rogers, Spring Rice, Lord J. Russell, and others, for fellow-guests: she was so affected in acting Mrs. Beverley, that her father was obliged to carry her into her dressing-room, where she screamed for

five minutes; "the last scream (when she threw herself on his body) was involuntary, not in the part, and she had not intended it, but could not resist the impulse." She testifies of herself, whenever playing Ophelia to her father's Hamlet, that the exquisite tenderness of his voice, the wild compassion and forlorn pity of his looks, and every shadow of expression of mingled anguish, so impressed and stirred her, that "my eyes scarce fixed on his ere they filled with tears; and long before the scene was over, the letters and jewel-cases I was tendering to him were wet with them." Mr. George Vandenhoff tells us of a young actress, otherwise unknown to fame, who, as Ophelia, at Hamlet's harsh words, "burst into a passion of tears, which seemed to shake her very frame, for, at least, two minutes." *

Macready's Journal records his performance of Lear, at Covent Garden Theatre, in May 1834, with this effect, *inter alia*: "I felt that my audience were under my sway. . . . Above all, my tears were not those of a woman or a driveller; they really stained a 'man's cheeks.'" Some two months previously, he had noted in the same diary an incident in a Dublin performance of *Werner* which amused him a good deal, and at his own expense. He was inconvenienced and rather annoyed by Ulric looking on the ground, or anywhere but in his, Werner's, face, as he should have done; "my displeasure, however, vanished," he goes on to say, "on seeing the tears fast trickling down his cheek, and, forgiving his inaccuracy on the score of his sensibility, I continued the scene with augmented energy and feeling, and left it with a very favourable impression of the young man's judgment and warm-heartedness." But mark the sequel. In the course of the play Ulric accosted Werner behind the scenes, begging forgiveness for his apparent inattention to the other's speeches, and explaining the cause,—namely, that he had painted his

* Of the same lady's Virginia, played to the same gentleman's Virginius, the latter elsewhere reports, as she clung to him with confiding tenderness, "Tears streamed from her uplifted eyes; I caught the infection; and the audience wept, and women sobbed in sympathy."—*Dramatic Reminiscences*, by G. Vandenhoff, pp. 128, 150.

face so high on the cheek, that the colour had got into his eyes, and kept them running during the whole act. "Tears, idle tears, I know not what ye mean." There may be some English sceptics as to the genuine composition of those tears of Frédéric Lemaître for which Victor Hugo vouched, in his annotations on *Ruy Blas* : "M. Frédéric a des larmes, de ces vraies larmes, qui font pleurer les autres." Yet why not?

"Perhaps! who knows?—it is the old debate,
Do actors feel the rage they simulate?
Some do, some not: Siddons was cool enough
To pause from murder for a pinch of snuff;
Macready's Tell shoots just above his son,
And his hand trembles when the play is done."*

There is a Transatlantic flavour about the story of an actor so thoroughly carried away by his feelings, whilst performing in a suicide scene, as not only to plunge a real dagger home to the hilt in his breast, but faithfully to support his character to the last by dying in a studied attitude, according to the most approved stage rules. Peregrine Pickle stood up for the histrionic enthusiasm of imagination which purports to identify an actor consciously with the very hero he represents; and he recounted from Lucian the story of a certain celebrated pantomime, who, in acting the part of Ajax in his frenzy, was transported into a real fit of delirium, during which he tore to pieces the clothes of the player who stalked before him, snatched an instrument from one of the musicians and broke it over the head of him who impersonated Ulysses, and ran to the consular bench to despatch a couple of senators instead of sheep. This sort of heresy Dr. Johnson vigorously attacked in a colloquy with John Kemble. "Are you, sir," he asked, "one of those enthusiasts who believe themselves transformed into the very character they represent?" The rising young tragedian modestly answered that he had never felt quite so strong a persuasion as that, himself. "To be sure not, sir," the Doctor rejoined; "the thing is impossible. And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he

* St. Stephen's, Part iii.

performed it." Elliston was by repute tipsy when, in the height and glory, the "tinsel and Dutch metal intoxication," as Mr. Sala words it, "of a cardboard coronation," he thought himself George the Fourth in reality, and blessed his people with vinous solemnity and sincerity. The true artist, says Elia, is not possessed by his subject, but has dominion over it: "He ascends the empyrean heaven, and is not intoxicated." If content awhile to be mad with Lear, or to hate mankind (a sort of madness) with Timon, he suffers neither the madness nor the misanthropy to go unchecked, nor ever looses his hold on the reins of reason, while most he seems to do so. As Michonnet cautions his too impulsive pupil, "*Il faut du calme et du sang-froid, même dans l'inspiration.*" It is a master of arts indeed whom Milton portrays, that, "as to passion moved, Fluctuates disturb'd, yet comely," and, at the height of passion, stands in himself collected. Some critics are for applying to the impassioned actor the argument addressed to the skilful surgeon—that if he feels too strongly during the progress of a disease, his judgment may be affected by that very sensibility, and he may be rendered incapable of doing his duty steadily and fearlessly. Sainte-Beuve upholds the supremacy of that *puissance* which "*domine et régit une œuvre, et qui fait que l'artiste y reste supérieur comme à sa création.*" And this he exalts at the expense of that lower order of power which leaves the artist "*en proie à son œuvre,*" so that his talent "*l'emporte comme un char lancé à quatre chevaux.*" He must feel; but he must not be carried away by his feeling.

Madame de Staël describes the professional story-teller of Venice as using the most animated and animating gestures; his voice is raised; he excites and exasperates himself, you think; he grows pathetic, you feel; and yet it is evident, all the while, to a discriminating observer, that at heart he is perfectly unmoved. Shakspeare, in one of the Sonnets, speaks of those

"Who, moving others, are themselves as stone."

But the power of moving, in the entire absence of emotion, is rare,—in the conspicuous absence of it, impossible. The

passions are ever eloquent, said Lord Brougham; left to themselves, their natural expression becomes contagious, and carries away the spectator when the actor is manifestly and vehemently moved. Amazed and bewildered sat Mr. Black's Princess of Thule to hear that mere lad Mosenberg sing as though his heart were breaking. Where had this boy caught such a trick of passion, or was it really a trick that threw into his voice all the pathos of a strong man's love and grief? How had this mere lad learnt all the yearning and despair of love? "It was not the finely-trained art of his singing, but the passionate abandonment of it, that thrilled Sheila, and indeed brought tears to her eyes."* To the same author we owe the testimony of that enthusiastic actress, Annie Brunel, who professes that when she gets into the spirit of her part, she feels herself throbbing all over with a delicious life. Her very fingers tingle with enjoyment, she gets a new warmth within her; and many a time she can't help crying or laughing quite naturally when the scene suggests it. The Rachel Armadale of Mrs. Craik is of a more tragical disposition, as befits her history. Acting in Milman's *Fazio*, she is her true

* An after-display, in another mood, caused Sheila to marvel within herself at the rare faculty of artistic representation possessed by this precocious boy, if he really exhibited all those moods, and whims, and tricks of manner, without having himself been in the position of the despairing and imploring lover.

Says Radclyffe of Fanny Millinger in Cora, "How well she acts!" "Yes," replies Godolphin, as with folded arms he looks quietly on; "but what a lesson in the human heart does good acting teach us. Mark that glancing eye—that heaving breast—that burst of passion—that agonized voice; the spectators are in tears. The woman's whole soul is in her child? Not a bit of it! She feels no more than the boards we tread on: she is probably thinking of the lively supper we shall have; and when she comes off the stage she will cry, "Did I not *act* it well?" Radclyffe submits that probably she feels while she depicts the feeling. "Not she," the other maintains: "years ago she told me the whole science of acting was trick; and trick—trick—trick it is, on the stage or off," adds the jaded cynic.

So with the Catarina who plays somnambulistic Lady Macbeth, in *Thalatta*—and as the curtain falls sends out invitations to supper. The narrator of her triumph on the stage is a little bewildered by the sudden

self from the time the wife's jealousy begins to dawn : "That was her life and its reality. All passions, all tendernesses, dammed up eternally in her woman's heart, rushed to swell the tide of her genius." What seemed acting, was her true self hidden under varied phases of character ; but in its depths still one and the same. In Bianca, "a shiver ran over all her limbs ; then she rose upright, and her voice was heard once more. It sounded hollow—unnatural." Once or twice she paused in her speech, as if the words were floating away from her memory—as was so natural in the poor maddened Bianca. "All the awful inspiration of her genius came upon her. Never was there acting so vividly, fearfully real." The secret was the same as in the case of George Eliot's Caterina, when, under strange stress of emotion, she threw herself at once into the impetuous intricacies of a magnificent fugue she was playing from Handel : in her happiest moments she could never have played it so well, for now, all the passion that made her misery was hurled by a convulsive effort into her music, "just as pain gives new force to the clutch of the sinking wrestler, and as terror gives far-sounding intensity to

change at the supper-table. The pallor of the spectral sleep-walker still haunted his mind, but he saw before him the rosy revel of a bacchante. Could this merry and mocking eye, this mischievous smile, pale their lustre at will under the pressure of an intolerable woe?

The Viola of *Zanoni* acts a part in which "her tears were truthful ; her passion that of nature : it was almost too terrible to behold ;" while, as regards the actress herself, she had to be borne from the stage exhausted and insensible, amidst such a tempest of admiring rapture as "continental audiences alone can raise,"—the crowd standing up, men wiping their eyes, and women sobbing aloud.

When Consuelo describes to Haydn the "frightful" agitation she feels and deplores, he expresses less a fear than a hope that it will always be so ; for without true and deep emotion, where would be her power ? "I have often," he tells her, "endeavoured to impress upon the musicians and actors I have met, that without this agitation, this delirium, they could do nothing, and that, in place of calming down with years and experience, they would become more impressionable at each fresh attempt." Consuelo is in a mood in which she inclines to think that, "dramatic art being a perpetual falsehood," Heaven inflicts upon its votaries the punishment of believing as real the illusions they practise on the spectator.

the shriek of the feeble." But the risks to art are considerable in such cases. Balzac says that when an artist has the misfortune to be overcharged himself with the very passion he seeks to express, he is thereby disqualified for painting it—the thing itself is there, instead of the image of the thing. Now, "*l'art procède du cerveau et non du cœur.*" When your subject sways you, you are its slave, not its master. The sovereign is besieged by his people. To feel too keenly at the moment when *il s'agit d'exécuter*, Balzac calls the insurrection of the senses against the faculty of thought.

Diderot has never lacked disciples in his doctrine that not only in the art of acting, but in all the arts which are called imitative, the possession of real sensibility is a bar to eminence; sensibility being, according to his view, "*le caractère de la bonté de l'âme et de la médiocrité du génie.*" But the doctrine has not made over many converts among the countrymen of Shakspeare and Garrick. Mrs. Browning has given forcible expression to a view more in favour among them:

"The artist's part is both to be and do,
Transfixing with a special, central power
The flat experience of the common man,
And turning outward, with a sudden wrench,
Half agony, half ecstasy, the thing
He feels the inmost; never felt the less
Because he sings it. Does a torch less burn
For burning next reflectors of blue steel,
That *he* should be the colder for his place
'Twixt two incessant fires,—his personal life's,
And that intense refraction which burns back
Perpetually against him from the round
Of crystal conscience he was born into
If artist-born? O sorrowful great gift
Conferr'd on poets, of a twofold life,
When one life has been found enough for pain!"

Charles Lamb was talking with Mrs. Crawford not long before her death about the quantity of real present emotion which a great tragic performer experiences during acting; and when he ventured to think that, from the deadening effect of repetition, the player must at last come to rely on

the memory of past emotion, rather than express a present one, she indignantly repelled the notion that, with a truly great tragedian, the operation by which such effects were produced upon an audience, could ever degrade itself into what was purely mechanical. Elia admired the delicacy with which, avoiding to instance in her *self*-experience, this lady mentioned that so long ago as when she used to play the part of the Little Son to Mrs. Porter's Isabella, when that impressive actress bent over in her some heartrending colloquy, the younger performer felt real hot tears come trickling from the eyes of the elder, which, in her own vigorous diction, "perfectly scalded her back." One thinks of that favourite image with more than one Lord Lytton, of the actor of Athens who moved all hearts as he clasped the burial urn, and burst into broken sobs: "How few there," exclaims the author of *Zanoni*, "knew that it held the ashes of his son!" And the author of *Lucile* has versified, not diversified, the incident:

"When the Greek actor, acting Electra, wept over
The urn of Orestes, the theatre rose
And wept with him.—What was there in such active woes
To thrill a whole theatre? Ah, 'tis his son
That lies dead in the urn he is weeping upon!
'Tis no fabled Electra that hangs o'er that urn,
'Tis a father that weeps his own child.—Men discern
The man through the mask; the heart moved by the heart
Owns the pathos of life in the pathos of art."

CHAPTER XI.

Breaking up and Broken off.

§ I.

LIFE'S LAST WORDS CUT SHORT BY DEATH.

Hamlet, Act v., Sc. 2.

MUCH could Hamlet, and much he would have said,—for how much, he felt, wanted explaining,—when the stroke of death was upon him, and strength suddenly failed him, and the needed time.

“Had I but time, (as this fell sergeant, death,
Is strict in his arrest,) O, I could tell you,—
But let it be :—Horatio, I am dead.” . . .

Did you ever see any man arrested, but it was before he was aware? asks Dr. South in one of his sermons; adding, as became the preacher and his text, “A man would not willingly have his friend take him in a surprise, much less then his greatest enemy.” Hamlet can only trust to Horatio to report him and his cause aright. “Oh, I die, Horatio: The potent poison quite o’ercrows my spirit. . . . The rest is silence.” And so cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince.

As fain would survivor sometimes hear more, as dying man would utter it. Like Cymbeline when urging Iachimo,—

“Renew thy strength :
I had rather thou should’st live while nature will,
Than die ere I hear more ; strive, man, and speak.”

Hotspur at the last “could prophesy,

But that the earthy and cold hand of death
Lies on my tongue. No, Percy, thou art dust,
And food for—,”

the unspoken word is supplied by Prince Henry, "For worms, brave Percy; fare thee well, great heart!" And in the Second Part of the same historical play we have the elder Henry, a dying man, thus forced to own his sheer physical inability to say more: "More would I, but my lungs are wasted so, That strength of speech is utterly denied me." So moribund Mortimer, again, in the First Part of *King Henry VI.*, when urged by Plantagenet to explain his strange sad history: "I will, if that my fading breath permit, And death approach not ere my tale be done." And in the Third Part there occurs this record by Somerset of a brave life's last words cut short by death, or so muffled as to be lost in the utterance:

"Ah, Warwick, Montague hath breathed his last;
And to the latest gasp cried out for Warwick,
And said, Commend me to my valiant brother,—
And more he would have said; and more he spoke
Which sounded like a cannon in a vault,
That might not be distinguish'd."

Early in the second book of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the good Sir Guyon lights on a sorely wounded lady, to whose recovery he devotes himself like a true knight, all of the olden time; but his endeavours are futile: the fell sergeant Death has his summons to enforce against that fair creature, and is strict in his arrest. At least then would the knight learn from her dying lips the story of her wrongs:

"Thrice he her rear'd, and thrice she sunk againe,
Till he his armes about her sides 'gan fold,
And to her said, 'Yet, if the stony cold
Have not all seized on your frozen hart,
Let one word fall that may your grief unfold,
And tell the secret of your mortall smart.'"

Some ten succeeding stanzas are occupied with the dying lady's effort to tell her story to its sad end. But her would-be last words are cut short by death:

"'Which, when I, wretch'—Not one word more she sayd,
But breaking off the end for want of breath,
And slyding soft, as downe to sleepe her layd,
And ended all her woe in quiet death."

The last scene of the *Cupid's Revenge* of Beaumont and Fletcher, as sensational a tragedy as John Webster himself could have penned, comprises this fragment, by way of an unfinished terminus ad quem :

"*Leucippus*. Last, I beseech you that my mother-in-law
May have a burial according to—

Ismenus. To what, sir ?

Dorialis. There's a full point."

Yet had the murdered prince been wistful to express his last wishes in full ; and in his anxiety to do so, had charged the bystanders to be still, and to hear him out :

"Let not a man stir, for I am but dead :
I've some few words which I would have you hear,
And am afraid I shall want breath to speak them."

The fear was too well founded, and full utterance was denied him. So with Selim in Congreve's *Mourning Bride* :

"My tongue falters, and my voice fails—I sink—
Drink not the poison—for Alphonso is—

[*Dies*.

Sheridan burlesqued this sort of thing, in *The Critic*, when Whiskerandos falls in fair fight with the Beefeater, and tells him,

"Captain, thou hast fenced well !
And Whiskerandos quits this bustling scene
For all eter—

Beefeater. —nity, he would have added, but stern death
Cut short his being, and the noun at once !"*

Massinger's *Duke of Milan* ends with this kind of no end :

"*Sforza*. Death, I obey thee . . . Good Eugenia,
In death forgive me . . . Bury me with Marcelia,
And let our epitaph be—

[*Dies*.

Tib. His speech is stopp'd."

In the previous act, Marcelia herself had similarly apostrophized death :

"Stay, Death, a little,
Till I have clear'd me to my lord, and then
I willingly obey thee."

* Compare *ce beau distiche* of Jean de La Tuille :

"Ma femme et mes enfans aie en recommanda . . .
Il ne dit rien de plus ; car la mort l'en garda."

Gibbon describes the Emperor Valentinian expiring in an agony of pain, and struggling, without success, to declare his intentions to the generals and ministers who surrounded his couch. Arbuthnot wrote to Swift an account of the death of his "dearest mistress," Queen Anne—and "dead as Queen Anne" has long been a vulgar phrase in vogue. The good doctor believed that never was sleep more welcome to weary traveller than to her, "only it surprised her too suddenly before she had signed her will." To some eager expectants the surprise was as unwelcome as the sudden decease of his wife was to that friend of Johnson's whose money she had secreted, and who could not learn the secret *where* from her, much as at last she wished to tell it, for just as she was striving to make the revelation, "she was seized with a convulsive fit and expired." Not more disappointing the *C'est* of Corneille's Antiochus :

"'C'est . . .' La Parque à ce mot lui coupe la parole ;
Sa lumière s'éteint, et son âme s'envole."

Told by his physicians that the end was near, William III. called for Bentinck—but the call itself was his last articulate utterance. Instantly Bentinck came, and eagerly he placed his ear close to the king's mouth. The lips of the dying man moved ; but there was no sound. Another king had enforced his fell arrest.

Mozart essayed with his latest breath to express a musical effect in his *Requiem*, for the expression of which that breath failed him all too soon. The score lay open on his bed ; and as the last faintness stole over him, he turned to Susmeyer, as one of his biographers relates,—his lips moved feebly, and he tried to indicate a peculiar effect from a particular set of instruments in the distribution of parts. But it was the last act of expiring thought, and thereupon the fell sergeant Death was swift in his arrest.

"La parole à sa lèvre, hélas ! montait encore,
Mais dans les sons éteints ne pouvait plus éclore."

When Byron knew himself to be dying, he called to his man Fletcher and desired him to "go to Lady Byron and "

. . . . Here his utterance became unintelligible, till he said, "You will tell her this ;" and Fletcher was obliged to reply, "I have not heard one syllable that you have been saying." "Good God!" exclaimed the dying man ; but it was too late for more.*

In what is reckoned one of Balzac's finest stories, the *Recherche de l'Absolu*,—treating of a supposed discovery of the philosopher's stone,—we are, as Mr. Leslie Stephen says, kept trembling on the verge of a revelation till we become interested in spite of our more sober sense: the philosopher is allowed to discover the secret just as he is struck by a paralysis, which renders him incapable of revealing it; and he dies while making desperate efforts to communicate the crowning success to his family.

The French painter Decamps is said to have died in the belief that he had not given his message to the world ; but, observes Mr. Hamerton, all men of genius feel this ; no one of great depth ever revealed all that was in him. Anatomists tell us that, after uttering the longest sentence we have breath for, there still remains in the lungs a reserve of air that we cannot expel ; and so men of genius, who have said all that they were able to say, have still a reserve of unexpressed ideas, which die with them, as the reserve of air remains in

* The close of the fourth act of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* is concerned with Gessler bleeding to death and making signs with his hands, which he repeats with vehemence when he finds they are not understood. Von Harras, his master of the horse, addresses him :

"What would you have me do?"

Shall I to Küssnacht? I can't gess your meaning," etc.

So with Gilbert and L'Inconu, who is done to death in Victor Hugo's *Marie Tudor* : "Venge-moi et venge-toi," are the dying words, left incomplete, of the latter ; and the perplexed survivor exclaims, "Mort ! que je me venge ! que veut-il dire? . . . (*Secouant le cadavre*) Parle, encore un mot !—Il est bien mort !" As with dying Basil in Miss Baillie's tragedy, "I fain would say"—and then there's a deep pause, and Basil expires, and, as with Hamlet, the rest is silence. The last words, upon which the curtain falls, of another of Joanna Baillie's tragedies, *The Separation*, are quotable in this connexion ; Garcio is the speaker :

"Could I but live till I have seen my child !
It may not be : the gripe of death is here."

the chest of a corpse.* The philosophic author of *Small Books on Great Subjects* remarks, that the last symptom of life that we see in the dying, is usually an ineffectual effort to do or say something which the dying person evidently thinks of importance; disappointment at being unable to do it is visible, and the man dies.

What a symbol of life in death, of death in life, is that terminal *aber* which, all in its significant incompleteness, was the last word penned by Friedrich Schlegel. He had begun the remarkable sentence, "Das ganz vollendete und vollkommne verstehen selbst aber"—when the hand of Sickness (fell sergeant, own brother to Death) laid an arrest upon his pen. Fiction revels in these unfinished sentences, sometimes broken off at a syllable: witness the "It is true, as I am a gentle—" of the drunken vagrant in Cooper's *Prairie*, and the "Write to Lord Les——" of Digby, in Lord Lytton's completest novel.

The "false Dmitri," that Perkin Warbeck of Russia, whose real origin puzzles the historians to this day, had actually grasped the crown, by the help of the Poles, when a counter-insurrection ousted him, and he was thrown from a window in the Kremlin. At the last moment they said to him, "Tell us who you are." He refused; but just as they were casting him down he cried out, "I will tell you, I will,"—but it was just too late; he fell headlong, and the False Dmitri and his secret died together. It is only in a Fable in Song that such a truce is won from the fell sergeant Death as in that "corpse-about-to-be," from whose two bright feverish eyes, life defiantly

"So fierce was flashing, that Death, fain to know
What meant their dumb defiance, render'd back
A moment's breath to set the man's lips free;
As hunters on a dying fire do blow
For light to guide them on their dubious track,
Ere they fare onward thro' the midnight black."

The certificate of Philip Hay's marriage has been confided to a friend, whose name Robert Ainsleigh (in the story called

* Contemporary French Painters, by P. G. Hamerton.

after him) in vain implores his dying friend to reveal while yet there is time. But the exigencies of the story require that the right address should not be discovered till the third volume; and 'His name, Phil! for Heaven's sake, his name!' is iterated without effect: before it can be told, the dying man loosens his arm about his friend's neck, sinks back, and is gone.

The chapter which records the dying of Mark Challoner in *The Rock Ahead*, closes with his son Miles's interrupted appeal to the old squire, whose parting words of injunction perplex him, "But, father, you will surely tell me why—," but the nurse touched Miles on the shoulder as he spoke, and pointed to the squire, whose swooning had been noticed by her observant eyes alone. "When he recovered himself he essayed again to speak, but his strength failing him he laid his hand in his son's, and so peacefully passed away." In after-days an intense yearning possesses that son to know the import of the sentence—but now there was no means of satisfying this yearning: the secret had to all appearance died with the squire, but its consequences remained, to become an almost intolerable burden to Miles Challoner. The old man in the *Rent Day*, "with something on his mind," is described with his hand stretched forth, and his throat working, "as though the words were there, but couldn't out;—and so he died." The old man in *Martin Chuzzlewit* tried to articulate his meaning in some intelligible words; but "what he would have said, God knows. He seemed to utter words, but they were such as man had never heard." Says Leddy Grippy in John Galt's *Entail*, "Eh, Jamie, that was a moving sight—before I could get a pen, to put in your dying grandfather's hand, he took his departure to a better world, where, we are taught to hope, there are neither lawyers nor laws." A pen is what poor dying Mrs. Gradgrind insists on having when she is past speech, and far past pen-holding. The dying declaration of Meg Merrilies stops short at a critical point, where her strength fails her. Scott makes the dying Colonel Gardiner on the field of battle appear to struggle for utterance, as he recognizes Edward Waverley: "But he felt that death was

dealing closely with him, and resigned his purpose." A very different death in all respects save that of strict arrest, is that of the wretched Michael Lambourne in *Kenilworth*, who summons to his deathbed Wayland Smith, and by signs and inarticulate murmurs endeavours to convey information which is left perturbingly vague and incomplete. The "respectable Mrs. Woodley" in Theodore Hook's *Maxwell*, who could not "die easy" without disburthening her mind of a momentous family secret, unfortunately deferred her communications to so late a period of her existence, that when the person mainly concerned was at her bedside, and pressed her to reveal what she knew, she could not rally sufficiently to explain herself, and expired in his arms without satisfying his very natural curiosity. The first chapter of Mr. Wilkie Collins' *Dead Secret* describes the effort of a moribund wife to deliver herself of a last injunction; but the sentence is never completed; in vain the troubled listener gives ear to those parting breaths and broken words: "The last words died away very softly. The lips that had been forming them so laboriously parted on a sudden and closed again no more." The second chapter of the same author's *Armada* describes a doomed man who is overheard to say, "I shall not live to tell it: I must write it before I die,"—and then his pen is heard to scrape, scrape, scrape over the paper, but on a sudden it stops, for mortal paralysis has struck the penman, and there is a fatal blank in the letter, and thereby hangs a tale.

Robert Dempster, in George Eliot's story of *Janet's Repentance*, kept his eyes fixed on his hardly used wife, when death was upon him, and there was a faintly perceptible motion of the lips, as if he wanted to speak:—but the moment of speech was for ever gone—the moment for asking pardon of her, if he wanted to ask it. To the same pen we owe the description of Romola leaning forward to catch the broken words of her dying brother; a single word followed by a long silence; again a single word, and then a silence longer still—even unbroken silence, for no other sound came from the wasted lips; and Romola uttered a low but piercing cry, as the certainty came upon her that the silence of mis-

understanding between them twain could never be broken now. "The revelation that might have come from the simple questions of filial and brotherly affection had been carried into irrevocable silence." Then again we have Jane Gair in the *Gayworthys*, struck by paralysis just when about to "make a clean breast of it"—she could never tell her story or clear her conscience now: there was a look of striving in the wide-open eyes; a helpless, inarticulate sound came from between the lips, where the tongue lolled incapable. She died; and made no sign. Fiction's familiars may recall too the dazed efforts of Eugene Wrayburn, in Dickens, to utter a last message before he quite loses reason and life,—“Keep me here a few moments, Mortimer. Try, try! . . . Hear me speak first. Stop me—stop me! . . . Don't let me wander till I have spoken. Give me a little more wine.”* And the failing of all the precautions of *cet honorable père* of Soulié's,—“Mais la rapidité de la mort avait tout rendu inutile.” And the last looks rather than words of Suzette, as recorded by John Marston Hall: “Her words became quite unintelligible, and perceiving that I did not understand her, she paused, and gazed in my face with a painful stare of anger and disappointment, as if my want of attention had been the cause of my not comprehending what she said.” And the agony of the moribund mother in Miss Lee's *Cavendish*, wildly demanding the presence of the son to whom she must confide a secret dearer than life, and who vainly knelt whole nights by her bedside. And the “My son, you must without hesitation—,” but there an end, of Marshal Simon's father, in *Le Juif errant*.

Hawthorne's Artist of the Beautiful, Owen Warland, was tremulously anxious lest death should surprise him in the midst of his labours; an anxiety common perhaps to all men

* Quite exceptional is the incident over which Mr. Barham made merry in the *Ingoldsby Legends*:

“Norman kneels by the clergyman fainting and gory,
And begs he won't die till he's told him his story;
The Father complies,
Re-opens his eyes,
And tells him all how and about it—and dies!”

who set their hearts upon anything so high in their own view of it, that life becomes important only as conditional to its accomplishment. Can the philosopher, it is asked, big with the inspiration of an idea that is to reform mankind, believe that he is to be beckoned from this sensible existence, at the very instant when he is mustering his breath to speak the word of light? Should he perish so, the weary ages may pass away—the world's whole life-sand may fall, drop by drop—before another intellect is prepared to develop the truth that might have been uttered then. But history is confidently appealed to as affording many an example, where the most precious spirit, at any particular epoch manifested in human shape, has gone hence untimely, without space allowed him, so far as mortal judgment could discern, to perform his mission on the earth. The prophet dies, and the man of torpid heart and sluggish brain lives on. The poet leaves his song half-sung, or finishes it, beyond the scope of mortal ears, in a celestial choir. "The painter—as Allston did—leaves half his conception on the canvas, to sadden us with its imperfect beauty, and goes to picture forth the whole, if it be no irreverence to say so, in the hues of Heaven." But, rather, in the persuasion of a mind so constituted as was Nathaniel Hawthorne's, such incomplete designs of this life will be perfected nowhere; and this so frequent abortion of man's dearest projects must be taken as a proof that the deeds of earth, however etherealized by piety or genius, are without value, except as exercises and manifestations of the spirit.*

* Pages in plenty might be filled with miscellaneous instances of dying men loth to leave the world till their recognized work in it should be finished, and their last word to it fairly said.

Keen were the regrets of Sylla in his last illness, that he could not live to see the new Capitol finished, as the one thing wanting to complete his felicity—*hoc tamen felicitati suæ defuisse confessus est*. And who but has sympathized with Archimedes praying the soldier to hold his hand for a moment, that he might not leave his theorem imperfect? One feels with and for Lorenzo the Magnificent, in his dying lament to Politian and Pico that he could not live to complete the collection of MSS. he was forming.

Mr. Froude remarks of Wolsey, when his health was breaking, and he

§ II.

THE CURTAIN FALLS UPON THE FALLEN DEAD.

LAERTES in the fencing-match wounds Hamlet with the poisoned rapier ; then, in scuffling,—so the stage direction runs,—they change rapiers, and Hamlet afterwards wounds

was past sixty, that he reckoned himself moderate in limiting his hopes to the execution of a work for which (the Reformation included) centuries imperfectly sufficed : it seemed as if the great cardinal measured his stature by the lengthening shadow, as his sun made haste to its setting.

Richard Hooker in his last illness said often to Dr. Saravia that he did not beg a long life of God for any other reason, but to live and finish his three remaining books of Church Polity,—“and then, Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace.” Izaak Walton speaks of him as hastening his own death by hastening to give life to these three Books. Almost piteously pathetic were Herder's longings for more time, that he might finish the works on which his heart was set. His wife records his eager expression of a wish to live just long enough at least to write “but two numbers more of the *Adrastea* :” these two should be his last and consummate labour, and in them he would deliver his entire confession of faith, definite, deliberate, and perfect. One thinks of André Chénier on the scaffold, striking his head against one of the posts of the guillotine, and saying, “It is a pity, for I had something *here*”—the complaint not of life but of genius cut off before its time. Lavoisier, cut off in the midst of his profound chemical researches, pleaded in vain for a respite to complete a scientific discovery. His was a violent death, but in the case of a natural one, David Hume, himself a dying man, found or made amusement in imagining what excuses he could press upon Charon for a little delay—such as correcting his works for a new edition, or living to see the downfall of the prevailing system of superstition,—which last plea would go far to make Charon bid him get into the boat that instant, as a lazy, loitering rogue. How frequent the occurrence and recurrence in literary history of such wishful, wistful longings as this of Washington Irving's touching his *Life of Mahomet* : “If I can only live to finish it, I would be willing to die the next moment.” The laureate's Northern Farmer is a realistic type of a vast constituency, when he sets forth what he might have done, had but “godamoighty let ma aloän.” “Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-tääkin' o' meä?” And if not a parallel passage, not an impertinent one either, is that from the musings of the same poet's Poet-Princess :

“Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,

Laertes. At the same moment, "Look to the Queen, there, ho!" for Gertrude falls, after drinking from the poisoned cup. The turn of Claudius follows straight on hers, for Hamlet's envenomed blade strikes home. Poisoned all, by cup, or by cold steel. Hamlet has dallied and delayed through five acts; but the last scene of the last act is

That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

When his favourite horse Sorrel stumbled on the molehill, and King William fell off, and broke his collar-bone, the sufferer's frame was too weak to bear even a slighter shock, and he felt that his time was come, and grieved, says Macaulay, "with a grief such as only noble spirits feel," to think that he must leave his work but half finished. "Now that this great prospect is opening before me, I do wish to stay here a little longer," were William's wistful words to one of these whom most he loved. They are given on almost the last page of Macaulay's unfinished history; and may not such thought, such regrets, have been mournfully the historian's very own?

Often, before that brightening prospect opened, had William III., on his own showing, wished for death. The change of feeling reminds us of what is told of Nelson's last hours. The dying admiral's sufferings wrung from him at one time the expression of a wish that he were dead; but anon he wished to live a little longer, that he might hear the completion of the victory which he had seen so signally begun.

Gainsborough's unfinished portrait of Sir Joshua Reynolds in particular, as well as his deepened sense of artistic incompleteness and shortcomings in general, troubled his dying hours; but the feeling led to a reconciliation at least with the great rival from whom he had been latterly and unhappily estranged.

Could Priestley's physician but prolong his life for six months, the old philosopher would die content, for by that time he counted on completing his literary designs. If he had to depart sooner, how could he depart in peace?

Equally anxious was Dr. Young to live just long enough to complete his Egyptian Dictionary.

Sir James Stephen describes Henry Martyn on his return homeward from Hindostan through Persia, in broken health, pausing at Shiraz, and there labouring for twelve months with the ardour of a man who, distinctly perceiving the near approach of death, feared lest it should intercept the great work for which alone he desired to live—the translation of the New Testament into Persian.

Schleiermacher was horribly afraid of dying the night before he completed his Discourses on Religion. Later, he rather cherished than

crowded with action,* and the stage is strewn with the dead.

“This quarry cries on havoc!—O proud death!
What feast is toward in thine eternal cell,
That thou so many princes, at a shot,
So bloodily hast struck?”

The sight is dismal . . .
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning, and forced cause;
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads.”

How are the mighty fallen! And as they fell, so let them lie, and darkness be the burier of the dead.

Contemporaries of Shakspeare's are chargeable with using blood as they would the paint of the property-man in the theatre. Writers of inferior genius, said Lamb, mistake

deprecatd a conviction that he should die as soon as his Plato was completed.

Sir Astley Cooper having imperilled his life by a severe fall from his horse, was one morning lamenting the event as fatally arresting a train of professional inquiry upon which he had been engaged, and to have completed which he thought would prove of the highest public benefit. “Make yourself quite easy, my friend,” replied Mr. Cline; “the result of your disorder, whether fatal or otherwise, will not be thought of the least consequence by mankind.” Great was the merriment among the Spanish partisans in Paris, in 1591, when their prisoner and victim, the President Brisson, implored that his death might be deferred until he should have completed, in prison, a legal work which by his premature removal would be lost to his country. They seem to have regarded him much as Mat Prior did the Gabriel of his epigram:

“‘O death! how thou spoil'st the best project of life,’
Said Gabriel, who still, as he buried one wife,
For the sake of her family married her cousin;
And thus, in an honest collateral line,
He still married on till his number was nine,
Full sorry to die till he made up his dozen.”

* Tieck offers what some critics deem an ingenious conjecture by way of disposing of the difficulty in the stage direction, which runs, “In scuffling they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes”—every one recognizing strong improbabilities connected with the supposition, that an actual change of the rapiers should take place during the scuffle; and since the change is not of a kind which can be made palpable to the audience, it must be considered an undramatic incident. So Tieck conjectures—and thereby, as the late George Moir pointed out, adds another base

quantity for quality. But writers of genius such as Marlowe and Kyd could revel in slaughtering work. What Charles Knight deemed the most popular play of the early stage, and in many respects a work of great power, the "old Jeronimo," as Ben Jonson calls it, thus concludes, with a sort of Chorus spoken by a ghost :

"Ay, now my hopes have end in their effects,
When blood and sorrow finish my desires.
Horatio murder'd in his father's bower ;
Vile Serberine by Pedringano slain ;
False Pedringano hang'd by quaint device :
Fair Isabella by herself misdone ;
Prince Balthazar by Belimperia stabb'd ;
The Duke of Castille, and his wicked son,
Both done to death by old Hieronimo,
By Belimperia fallen, as Dido fell ;
And good Hieronimo slain by himself :
Ay, these were spectacles to please my soul."

Not even the catastrophe, or confluent catastrophes combined, of *Titus Andronicus* could outdo this. Make Hamlet, it has been said or suggested, a common dramatic character, instead of one of the subtlest of metaphysical problems, and what is the tragedy? A tragedy of blood.

feature to the character of his *protégé*, the King—that Claudius, since the occasion when Laertes, at the head of the populace, had made his way into his palace, and threatened his person, regards the brother of Ophelia with almost as much hatred and jealousy as he does Hamlet ; his wish therefore is, like that of Iago in speculating on the chances of the encounter between Roderigo and Cassio, that in the duel both should fall. "Either way it makes for him." Tieck supposes, therefore,—and the author of the critical essays on Shakspeare in Germany calls the supposition "by no means improbable,"—that after each stage of the assault the rapiers are laid by for a time, while the combatants refresh themselves by walking up and down, and that by the contrivance of the King the page or attendant to whom in the meantime they are entrusted, on a sign from him makes the exchange, and delivers the poisoned foil to Hamlet. In this way the puzzling expression "they change" is supposed to refer not to the combatants but to the attendants. Whether Tieck's is a "change" for the better, it is permissible to doubt : the machinery, as he orders it, seems, if anything, more complex still, and the working of it harder to follow than before.

So with *Romeo and Juliet* : Mercutio killed ; Tybalt killed ; the apparent death of Juliet ; Paris killed in the churchyard ; Romeo swallowing poison ; Juliet stabbing herself. The marvel is, as Charles Knight says, that the surpassing power of the poet should make us forget that *Romeo and Juliet* can present such an aspect. All the changes which we know Shakspeare made in it, and in *Hamlet*, were to work out the peculiar theory of his mature judgment—that the terrible should be held, as it were, in solution by the beautiful, so as to produce a tragic consistent with pleasurable emotion. “Herein he goes far beyond Webster. His art is a higher art.” The tragedy of blood is softened, almost hidden, in the atmosphere of poetry and philosophy which surrounds it ; till, as in Shelley’s *Queen Mab*,

“Pale Death shuts the scene,
And o’er the conqueror and the conquer’d draws
His cold and bloody shroud.” *

History sometimes offers a signal example of this clearing the stage ; as in that one fatal year when Charles of Anjou entered Naples, and prepared for a more determined invasion of Sicily, little foreseeing that his arms were to be arrested by a mightier power, and that, as Milman words it, “one fatal year [1285] was to witness the death of all the great personages engaged in this conflict.” At Foggia died Charles himself, exhausted by disappointment and sorrow ; at Perpignan died Philip of France ; about a month later died Peter of Arragon ; while Pope Martin IV. had gone before (or as the Scotch say, predeceased) them all. The clearance must have impressed the imagination of those times ; an imagination given to expatiate over and revel in tragedies of wholesale extirpation and extermination. Not so very much later came the *Nibelungen Lied*, where bloody

* With this figure of the conqueror and the conquered may be compared what the same poet writes in the *Prometheus Unbound*,—the speaker, Jupiter, contemplating in dreary prevision, a

“desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.”

work has such free course ; where host after host perish in conflict with the doomed Nibelungen ; and ever after the terrific uproar, ensues a still more terrific silence ; and "o'er all, Death with black hands extends his mighty pall ;" or, as in Young's *terminus ad quem*, "And Midnight, universal Midnight, reigns." Or as in Lamartine's *Hymne de l'Ange de la Terre* after the destruction of the globe, when *la vie* was fled,

"Le dernier des vivans d'où son souffle avait fui
Était mort ; et la terre était morte avec lui . . .
Morte avec tous ses vents : et son silence seul
L'enveloppait partout comme un morne linceul"

The Oxford playwright, Thomas Goff, promised the approving spectators of his *Courageous Turk* a second part, wherein the horrors of the first should be outdone :

"If the first part, gentles ! do like you well,
The second part shall greater murders tell."

Fielding, and after him Kane O'Hara, burlesqued the exterminating excesses of homicidal tragedy, in the grand finale of *Tom Thumb*, where fell swoop follows on fell swoop, the more the merrier ; it is a case of Kilkenny cats, *mutatis mutandis* :

"Noodle. Her majesty the queen is in a swoon.

Queen. Not so much in a swoon but to have still
Strength to reward the messenger of ill.

[QUEEN kills NOODLE.

Frizaletta. My lover kill'd—His death I thus revenge.

[Kills the QUEEN.

Huncamunca. Kill my mamma ! O base assassin ! there !

[Kills FRIZALETTA.

Doodle. For that, take this !

[Kills HUNCAMUNCA.

Plumante. And thou, take that !

[Kills DOODLE.

King. Die, murderess vile !

[Kills PLUMANTE.

—Death makes a feast to-day,

And but reserves Ourselves for his *bonne bouche*.

So when the boy, whom nurse from danger guards,

Sends Jack for mustard with a pack of cards,

Kings, queens, and knaves tip one another down,

Till the whole pack lie scatter'd and o'erthrown.

Thus all our pack upon the floor is cast,

And my sole boast is, I will die the last.

[Stabs himself ;—they all lie on the stage, dead."

In a novel, if a personage dies, we have a right to ask why he dies: and on this account a Saturday Reviewer objects to such a story as Mr. Strickland's *Abbeys and Attics*, that it slaughters its unoffending characters, as Ajax, in his madness, slaughtered the sheep; the few who survive the general massacre escaping only under cover of an utter darkness which conceals the fugitives from their implacable foe. Even writers of Colonel Melville's calibre indulge for the nonce in wholesale doing to death. Thus in his *Gladiators* the curtain falls on the sack of the Temple: Calchas is knocked on the head by a stone; Valeria is pierced by the javelin of Eleazar, who also stabs the elephant of Placidius, and is crushed by its fall, while Placidius too is duly despatched; then again Hippias, at the head of his forlorn hope, is pierced by an arrow, and mingles his heart's blood with that of Valeria. True, in fact, said his critics, to the orthodox mode of clearing the stage, the author is careful to leave none surviving after the final tableau but the faithful lovers, whose hands Calchas joins together in a dying benediction.

The last scene of the last act of the last drama in Schiller's Wallenstein trilogy, makes a "clean sweep," or nearly so, of the dramatis personæ, which the Countess Terzky thus sums up:

"The Duke is dead,
My husband too is dead; the Duchess struggles
In the pangs of death; my niece has disappear'd.
This house of splendour and of princely glory
Doth now stand desolate. . . . I am the last"—

and before the scene closes she too ceases to live. "O house of death and horrors!" is Gordon's exclamation; and the strong language is none too strong. The Family Tragedy, so to call it, in the private theatricals of De Quincey's childhood,—that *Sultan Amurath* which the eldest brother composed, and into which all his brothers and sisters were pressed to act—scarcely burlesqued in its innocent gravity the rate of mortality in some renowned tragedies proper. The Sultan himself, though otherwise

a decent man, was too bloody, remarks as a sexagenarian critic one who took part in the piece as a child: what by the bowstring, and what by the scimitar, Amurath had so thinned the population with which he commenced business, that hardly any of the characters remained alive at the end of act the first; so that in composing act the second, the author had to proceed like Deucalion and Pyrrha, and to create an entirely new generation; which generation must, presumptively, have been quite as wicked as the first, since the poor Sultan found himself reduced to order them all for execution in the course of act the second. "To the brazen age succeeded an iron age; and the prospects were becoming sadder and sadder as the tragedy advanced." And perplexing to the playwright, too, so hard as he felt it to resist the instinct of carnage. To him the consequences were distressing; for a new set of characters in every act brought with it the necessity of a new plot, as people could not succeed to the arrears of old actions, or inherit ancient motives, like a landed estate: five crops, in fact, must be taken off the ground in each separate tragedy, amounting, in short, to five tragedies involved in one. This was to pile up the agony with a vengeance. And this has been practically the method in vogue with some stage experts. Slain off, right and left, the characters must be, that the curtain might fall on them all as they lay, not stood. But enough, and something over, of all this. Let fall the curtain on the fallen dead.

END OF THE SECOND SERIES.

INDEX.

- About, Edmond, 135, 251
 Accounted a good Actor, 336
 Achilles, 117
 Actors and Acting, 434 sq.
 Adams, J. Q., 94
 Addison, 53, 120, 163, 211, 232, 392, 420, 443
 Air, Dancing on, 253 sq.
 Air, Dining on, 210 sq.
 Airey, 307
 Ajax, 117
 Alderson, Baron, 15
 Alexander I., 164
 Alexander Farnese, 100
 Alexander Pheræus, 456
 Alexander the Great, 183
 Alfieri, 339
 Algazzali, 167
 Ali, 118
 Alison, Sir A., 37
 Androvandus, 15
 Anne, Queen, 475
 Anson, 48
 Anstey, 154, 165
 Antoninus, Marcus, 273
 Apothecary, 175 sq.
 Apuleius, 97
 Arbuthnot, 220, 475
 Arnould, Sir J., 327
 Ars celare artem, 320 sq.
 Art, Obtrusive, 315 sq.
 Ass, Writ down an, 28 sq.
 Asses, Feast of, 40
 Athanasius, St., 96
 Attila, 99
 Austen, Jane, 90
 Bacon, Lord, 263, 289, 424
 Baillie, Joanna, 41, 47, 50, 81, 124, 224, 382, 476
 Balzac, H. de, 15, 22, 79, 112, 173, 207, 307, 470, 476
 Banim, 385
 Barante, 342, 453
 Barham, R., 76, 164, 258, 389
 Barmecide, 211
 Baron, 436
 Barrow, 306
 Barry, Mrs., 463
 Bartas, Du, 17
 Baxter, 326
 Bayard, 142
 Beaconsfield, Lord, *see* Disraeli
 Beadles, 5
 Beattie, 367, 456
 Beaumont and Fletcher, 2, 31, 118, 137, 220, 278, 284, 293, 332, 335, 427, 474
 Beddoes, T. L., 70
 Bedfellows, Strange, 233 sq.
 Belzoni, 110
 Benedict XII., 33
 Béranger, 211
 Bernard, C. de, 242, 378, 450
 Besser, 411
 Beule, 66
 Beyle, H. (De Stendhal), 432
 Bill of fare, 225 sq.
 Biron, 247
 Bismarck, 240
 Black, W., 468
 Blossius, 8
 Blumenbach, 94
 Blunt, J. J., 290
 Blushing, 240 sq.
 Boaden, 73, 349, 390, 393, 446
 Boileau, 34, 192, 438
 Bolingbroke, 18, 143
 Boswell, 306
 Bothwell, 97, 106
 Bourd, 274
 Bourne, Vincent, 29, 306
 Boyd, A. K. H., 3, 302
 Boyet, 247
 Brachvogel, 450
 Braddon, M. E., 114, 135, 168, 246
 Brimley, G., 86, 429
 Brissot, 298
 Brontë, E., 274
 Brooke, Arthur, 194
 Brooks, C. S., 175
 Brougham, Lord, 327, 468
 Broughton, Rhoda, 10, 245
 Brown, C. Br., 238
 Brown, T., 35, 273, 328
 Browne, Sir T., 241
 Browning, E. B., 72, 231, 349, 423, 470
 Browning, R., 19, 69, 275
 Brummell, 315
 Bruyère, La, 45, 281
 Bruyset, 136
 Buckle, H. T., 273
 Buffon, 15, 311
 Burghley, Lord, 261, 265, 270, 292, 336
 Burke, 459
 Burney, Dr. C., 178
 Burns, R., 40, 157, 188, 269, 300
 Burton, R., 369
 Butler, S., 83
 Byrom, Dr., 412
 Byron, Lord, 35, 38, 72, 82, 100, 210, 273, 282, 302, 355, 419, 422, 432, 475
 Calderon, 80, 269, 429
 Caliban, 418

- Calvin, 297
 Camden, 96
 Campbell, Lord, 12, 162
 Campbell, T., 203, 464
 Canning, G., 242, 327
 Carlyle, T., 13, 19, 111, 198, 205, 207, 208, 232, 234, 241, 273, 305, 339, 406, 407, 420
 Caroline, Queen, 190, 330
 Carrel, A., 307
 Carus, 310
 Cassagnac, Gr. de, 426
 Cats, Jacob, 148
 Cervantes, 20, 34, 128, 218, 223, 310, 410
 Chalmers, Dr. T., 285
 Chambers, R., 6
 Chamfort, 276
 Channing, W. E., 172
 Charles I., 291
 Charles VI. (Emp.), 152
 Charles VI. (King), 173
 Charles XII., 310
 Charleys, Old, 6, 28 sq.
 Charles, Ph., I, 80, 193, 203, 346, 355, 390, 400, 425
 Chateaubriand, 111, 151, 230, 238, 340, 376, 411
 Chatham, Lord, 319, 320, 335
 Chaucer, 159, 355, 417
 Chesterfield, Lord, 96, 97, 266, 294, 297, 325
 Cibber, Mrs., 457, 460, 463
 Cibber, Theo., 557
 Cicero, 33, 297
 Cimon, 117
 Circumlocutory, 14 sq., 315 sq.
 Clarendon, Lord, 241, 259, 306
 Claudian, 204
 Claudius, 189, 395 sq., 449, 485
 Cleanthes, 37
 Clement VII., 185
 Clive, Lord, 315
 Clough, A. H., 282
 Cockburn, Lord, 217, 240
 Coke, 162
 Colbert, 292
 Coleridge, Hartley, 51, 53, 61, 94, 127, 200, 259, 266, 298, 307, 308, 350, 354, 369, 373, 395, 431, 453
 Coleridge, S. T., 1, 38, 41, 43, 44, 67, 75, 78, 90, 92, 102, 125, 131, 197, 207, 212, 238, 263, 270, 272, 295, 305, 352, 356, 357, 361, 369, 370, 373, 381, 398, 403, 426, 427, 428, 454
 Collins, Wilkie, 90, 479
 Collins, William, 331
 Colman, G., the elder, 463
 Colman, G., the younger, 226, 412
 Colour test of guilt, 239 sq.
 Columbus, 109
 Comedy and farce, 440
 Congreve, 322, 438, 474
 Conolly, Dr., 370, 381, 393
 Constant, B., 311
 Constantine, 309
 Consultation, Medical, 152 sq.
 Contingencies, 7 sq.
 Cook, D., 29
 Cooper, Sir A., 483
 Cooper, J. F., 196, 477
 Copleston, Bp., 9
 Corneille, 46, 100, 419, 475
 Cornwallis, C. F., 477
 Cosway, R., 311
 Couples, Hunting in, 414 sq.
 Cowper, W., 150, 306, 415, 439
 Cox, D., 331
 Crabbe, G., 21, 27, 67, 123, 235, 271, 282, 290, 341
 Craik, D. M., 468
 Crashaw, 156
 Crawford, Mrs., 470
 Croly, G., 330
 Cromwell, O., 119, 306, 337
 Curtius, 185
 Dallas, E. S., 5, 32, 68, 461
 Dante, 205, 210, 234, 434
 Daumas, 38
 Davy, Dr., 153
 Decamp, 476
 Defoe, 428
 Demogeot, 421
 Denman, Lord, 12, 327
 Dental ostentation, 247 sq.
 Desdemona, 57 sq., 82 sq., 114, 121, 129, 132
 Desgenettes, 187
 Despazes, 443
 Devrient, Emil, 400
 Dibdin, C., 437
 Dickens, C., 5, 11, 12, 22, 27, 31, 57, 58, 59, 128, 136, 138, 144, 169, 170, 176, 178, 180, 213, 225, 227, 236, 245, 258, 336, 414, 415, 478, 480
 Diderot, 459, 470
 Dido, 91, 108
 Digges, 457
 Dining upon air, 210 sq.
 Dion, 184
 Disease undivulged, 189 sq.
 Disraeli, B., 58, 105, 149, 170, 197, 221, 270, 284, 315
 Disraeli, L., 218
 Dimitri, 477
 Doctor, A deadly, 182
 Dodsley, 457
 Dogberry, I, 9, 13, 14, 21, 28 sq., 39.
 Dominic, St., 99
 Donne, 301
 Dorat, 435
 Dowden, E., 53, 54, 81, 133, 193, 201, 265, 267, 364, 371, 401, 404, 416
 Drayson, 235
 Drayton, 126
 Dress, 294 sq.
 Dryden, 159, 204
 Ducis, 76, 391, 401
 Dudevant, *see* G. Sand
 Dumas, 248, 252
 Dumont, 16
 Dunbar, 187
 Dyce, 126
 Eagles, J., 366
 Edgeworth, M., 245
 Edwardes, A., 151, 246, 378
 Edwards, M. B., 66
 Egotism, Shakspeare void of, 422
 Elbow, I, 14
 Eliot, G., 7, 10, 45, 46, 104, 123, 137, 195, 197, 317, 411, 469, 479
 Elizabeth, Queen, 118, 148, 185, 291, 313, 335
 Elliston, 447, 457, 467
 Elwood, 3
 Elze, K., 401
 Emerson, R. W., 248, 273, 422
 Emerson, W., 307
 Emilia, 45

- Emotion, Stage, 456 sq.
 Erasmus, 33, 48, 191
 Etty, 68
 Eunus, 142
 Euripides, 70, 82, 390
 Evelyn, J., 36, 235, 269,
 292, 295
 'Examiner, The,' 440

 Falstaff, 32, 95, 425
 Farce and comedy, 440
 Farquhar, 3, 224
 Fechter, C., 436
 Feltham, 409
 Fielding, H., 10, 20, 25,
 257, 334, 445, 487
 Fitzgerald, P., 181
 Fleming, 19
 Fonblanque, A., 29, 412
 Fontaine, La, 33, 41, 105,
 318
 Foote, S., 4
 Ford, J., 271, 414
 Forman, S., 97
 Fortune defied, 405 sq.
 Francis I., 291
 Francis, St., 100
 Frederick II. (Kaiser), 184
 Frederick II. (King), 254,
 407
 Frederick III., 311
 Freeman, E. A., 17
 Friar Laurence, 193 sq.
 Friars in Shakspeare, 200
 Friends, Old, 275 sq.
 Friendships, Old, Influence
 of wedlock on, 281 sq.
 Froude, J. A., 5, 203, 287,
 291, 336, 411

 Gainsborough, 483
 Galt, J., 160, 274, 251, 478
 Garrick, 444 sq., 460
 Garth, 159
 Gaskell, Mrs., 137, 195, 378
 Gay, J., 31
 Gellert, 198
 Gensonné, 298
 Gervinus, 193
 Gertrude, 319, 358, 399 sq.
 Ghost in Hamlet, The, 361,
 385 sq.
 Gibbon, 35, 44, 56, 96,
 117, 118, 140, 191, 407,
 450, 475
 Gibson, J., 66
 Gilbert, W., 249
 Giraldus, 19

 Girardin, St. Marc, 350,
 355, 367, 373
 Godwin, W., 246
 Goethe, 203, 205, 212, 260,
 308, 348, 355, 377, 383,
 407, 412, 416, 420
 Goff, T., 487
 Goldsmith, 17, 110, 306,
 314, 340
 Gonzalo, 253, 254
 Gore, Mrs., 90, 120, 127,
 190, 220, 224, 251
 Grattan, H., 330
 Green, H., 66
 Gresset, 41, 278
 Greville, C., 268, 464
 Gröhne, 34
 Gronow, Capt., 322
 Grosseteste, 319
 Grumio, 210
 Guérin, E. de, 123
 Guildenstern, 413, 416
 Guizot, 340
 Guizot, Mdme., 458

 Hake, J. G., 230
 Hale, Sir M., 306
 Haliburton, 19, 179, 250
 Hallam, 243
 Hamerton, P. G., 476
 Hamilton, T., 101
 Hamlet, 261, 342 sq.
 Hamlet and Horatio, 402
 sq.
 Hamlet and Ophelia, 372
 sq.
 Hamlet and the Players,
 434 sq.
 Hamlet, Character of, 342
 sq.
 Hamlet, Death of, 472
 Hamlet, Was he mad?
 365 sq.
 Hamley, Col., 242, 283
 Handkerchief, Othello's,
 75 sq.
 Hardy, 12
 Hare, J. C., 328, 359, 409
 Harpe, La, 77
 Hawthorne, N., 123, 145,
 168, 186, 195, 223, 229,
 384, 407, 480
 Haydon, B. R., 391
 Hazlitt, W., 78, 85, 208,
 234, 279, 360, 399, 418,
 419, 421
 Head, A plighted, 335 sq.
 Heber, Bp., 340

 Hecuba, Stage tears for,
 454 sq.
 Helps, Sir A., 198
 Hemans, 196, 244
 Henrietta Maria, Qn., 219
 Henry IV. (Fr.), 313
 Henry VII. (Kaiser), 189
 Henry VIII., 290
 Herbert, G., 194, 196, 215,
 305
 Herbs, Culling, 194 sq.
 Herder, 482
 Hermione, 45, 53 sq.
 Herod, 126
 Herodotus, 108, 327
 Herrick, 324
 Hildebrand, 96
 Hildebrandt, 87, 94
 Hill, Rowland, 307
 Hoffmann, F., 103
 Hogarth, 152
 Holland, Sir H., 171
 Holmes, O. W., 46, 159,
 243, 296
 Home, John, 109, 118
 Homer, 1, 35, 203, 207,
 230, 335
 Hood, T., 4, 30, 105, 129,
 208, 222, 248, 286
 Hook, Th., 30, 31, 50,
 226, 250, 479
 Hooker, 241, 482
 Horace, 38, 117, 167, 189,
 190, 210, 211, 240, 318,
 405
 Horatio, 402 sq.
 Horn, Franz, 262, 377, 387
 Horner, F., 77
 Hosius, 96
 Hugo, Victor, 39, 103, 122,
 124, 150, 220, 231, 233,
 248, 338, 362, 421, 466,
 476
 Humboldt, W. von, 409
 Hume, D., 323, 482
 Hungry gazers, 227 sq.
 Hunt, Holman, 331
 Hunt, John, 412
 Hunt, Leigh, 162, 191, 257,
 322, 324, 361, 393, 412,
 438, 440, 460
 Hutchinson, Col., 312
 Hypothetical cases, 7 sq.

 Iago, 46, 74, 139
 Imogen, 55, 57
 Impersonal, Shakspeare,
 424 sq.

- Indian or Judean? 125 sq.
 Individuality of Shakespeare's characters, 416 sq.
 Irving, Washington, 22, 48, 94, 110, 182, 282, 338, 482
 Isæus, 326
 Isocrates, 267, 326

 Jackson, Cyril, 386
 James V., 174
 Jameson, Mrs., 53, 59 sq., 69, 85, 351, 372, 374
 Jealousy, 50 sq., 75
 Jean Paul, *see* Richter
 Jeffrey, Lord, 50, 81, 344
 Jerrold, D., 128, 161, 226, 298, 322, 478
 John of Gaunt, 182
 Johnson, Dr. S., 9, 110, 167, 264, 276, 306, 310, 314, 347, 367, 398, 426, 457, 466
 Jones, Sir W., 338
 Jonson, B., 35, 39, 50, 109, 152, 160, 184, 213, 286, 299, 321, 334, 336, 406, 415, 416, 485
 Judean or Indian? 125
 Julian, 118, 184, 407
 Julio, 185
 Juvenal, 240, 281

 Kain, Le, 436, 456
 Kant, 8
 Kazinczy, 16
 Kean, E., 73, 348
 Kean, Mrs. C., 464
 Keats, J., 319
 Keeley, R., 447
 Kelly, Miss, 464
 Kemble, C., 465
 Kemble, Fanny, 464
 Kemble, J., 73, 94, 322, 464, 466
 Kingsley, C., 297, 304, 312, 317, 329, 343, 417
 Knight, C., 78, 176, 197, 369, 377, 391, 485
 Knowles, J. S., 51, 87, 124, 244
 Knox, J., 98
 Kohl, 415

 Lamartine, 70, 298, 411, 487
 Lamb, C., 29, 51, 77, 212, 222, 231, 252, 285, 359, 381, 398, 448, 470
 Landor, W. S., 20, 33, 78, 80, 216, 240, 335, 407, 457
 Last words cut short by Death, 472 sq.
 Laurence, Friar, 193 sq.
 Lee, H., 480
 Lemaitre, F., 466
 Leo X., 216
 Leonatus Posthumus, 44, 53, 55
 Leontes, 43 sq., 101
 Lerma, 100
 Lever, C., 27
 Lewes, G. H., 80, 190, 203, 345, 421, 430, 441, 445, 457, 459
 Lewis, Sir G. C., 18
 Libanius, 407
 Lie on Dying Lips, A Loving, 132 sq.
 Life only in Another Life, 121 sq.
 Life, Penal Sentence of, 139 sq.
 Life, Putting out the Light of, 129 sq.
 Lilly, 215
 Lister, 409, 415, 439
 Littré, 365
 Lloyd, C., 457
 Locke, 285, 320
 Lockhart, 307
 Longfellow, H. W., 120, 251
 Lope de Vega, Lopez, 185
 Losses, A Fellow that hath had, 21 sq.
 Louis IX., 251
 Louis XI., 310, 316
 Lowell, J. R., 207, 217, 268, 275, 291, 318, 363, 371, 425
 Lucan, 145
 Lucian, 65, 466
 Lucretius, 172
 Lunt, 126
 Luther, 40, 49, 155, 410
 Luzarche, V., 435
 Lyly, 267
 Lysias, 326
 Lytton, Edward, Lord, 12, 36, 80, 82, 88, 91, 130, 136, 144, 169, 173, 246, 266, 271, 302, 306, 308, 327, 343, 350, 362, 382, 421, 423, 431, 466, 468, 469, 471, 477
 Lytton, Robert, Lord, 34, 57, 122, 125, 145, 325, 471, 477

 Macaulay, Lord, 9, 80, 119, 199, 212, 327, 420, 432, 483
 Macbeth, 155, 166, 391, 420
 Macbeth, Lady, 391
 M'Crie, Dr., 98
 MacDonald, D. G. F., 19
 MacDonald, G., 250
 MacLeod, N., 7
 Macready, W. C., 345, 367, 401, 458, 465
 Mad, Was Hamlet? 365 sq.
 Magic, Natural, 98 sq.
 Maginn, W., 264, 270, 318, 398
 Magliabechi, 306
 Mahomet, 309, 389
 Mairet, 442
 Malady of the mind, 166 sq.
 Malherbe, 144
 Malone, 422
 Mamillius, 44, 56
 Manetho, 17, 18
 Marat, 180
 Marivaux, 320
 Marriage *versus* Friendship, 281 sq.
 Marryat, Capt., 241, 251
 Mars, Mdllé., 322
 Marston, J., 41, 335
 Martin, Theodore, 434, 437, 460
 Martineau, H., 12
 Martini, 68
 Martyn, H., 483
 Mary of Burgundy, 190
 Massinger, 474
 Masson, D., 352, 354
 Materia Medica, 147 sq.
 Maturin, 145
 Maurice, F. D., 329, 377
 Mauritanian, Othello a, 82, 94
 Maximian, 117
 Mayhew, H., 298
 Mazarin, 186
 Melville, G. Whyte, 127, 488

- Mendoza, 265
 Meredith, G., 26
 Merivale, Dean, 189
 Merivale, Herman, 420
 Michaelis, Adolf, 65
 Michelet, 142, 173, 190,
 200, 227, 323
 Middleton, Conyers, 297
 Middleton, T., 71
 Mill, J. S., 167, 447
 Millais, J. E., 330
 Milman, H. H., 40, 56, 96,
 99, 468, 486
 Milton, 102, 119, 180, 194,
 213, 238, 378, 467
 Mitford, M. R., 257, 339,
 458
 Moir, G., 261, 344, 351,
 375, 378, 386, 396, 399,
 484
 Moland, L., 435
 Molière, 46, 68, 96, 153,
 164, 172, 220, 249, 256,
 332, 419, 443
 Montaigne, 156
 Montesquieu, 188
 Montfleury, 462
 Moore, T., 164, 229, 423,
 458
 More, Hannah, 128, 151,
 457
 Morier, J., 298
 Morley, H., 400, 447
 Morley, J., 263, 321
 Motley, J. L., 36, 100, 292
 Mozart, 475
 Müllner, 328, 359
 Murat, 310

 Napoleon I., 37, 164, 324,
 389, 414
 Nasica, 8
 Naudé, G., 96
 Negro, 92 sq.
 Nelson, 483
 Nibelungen, 487
 Nichols, Dr., 167
 Njal, 199
 Nodier, C., 17, 111, 277,
 328
 North, Christopher, *see*
 Wilson, John
 North, Lord, 411

 Odysseus, 108, 111, 117,
 141, 241, 335, 370, 405
 Oglethorpe, Gen., 110
 Old friends, 275 sq.

 Oliphant, Mrs., 22, 57
 O'Neil, Miss, 464
 O'Neil, Shan, 118
 Ophelia, 358, 372 sq., 465
 Oppenheim, 187
 Orestes, 347, 355, 363, 365,
 471
 Othello, 43 sq., 50, 73 sq.,
 115 sq., 121, 125, 129,
 132, 139, 344, 425
 Otheman, 148
 Otway, 179, 316
 Overbury, Sir T., 78, 301
 Ovid, 117, 189, 211, 240

 Parmenio, 183
 Parr, S., 285
 Pascal, 241
 'Passons au déluge,' 16, 18
 Paulina, 45
 Payn, J., 151
 Payne, J. H., 141
 Peacock, T. L., 16, 37
 Peel, Sir R., 293
 Pepys, S., 2, 6, 303 sq.,
 338, 339
 Perthes, F., 411
 Petrarch, 162
 Petruccio, 210, 219
 Pitt, W., 338
 Philip II., 291
 Philip III., 100
 Philip V., 56
 Philippus, 183
 Physic to the dogs, 155 sq.
 Physicked in vain, 147 sq.
 Pindemonte, 152
 Pistol, 428, 430
 Planche, G., 344
 Planché, J. P., 464
 Plato, 65
 Platow, 158
 Plautus, 148, 276, 317, 335
 Play in the Play of *Hamlet*,
 The, 451
 Play's the thing, The, 448
 sq.
 Players, *Hamlet* and the,
 434 sq.
 Playfair, 243
 Plutarch, 8, 242, 320, 456,
 461
 Poisoning practitioners, 176
 sq., 182 sq.
 Polonius, 259 sq., 294, 315,
 331, 335, 336, 362, 367,
 425
 Pope, Alex., 31, 49, 167,
 219, 274, 302, 306, 321,
 408, 414, 417, 426, 431,
 439, 456
 Porson, R., 307, 308
 Porter, Mrs., 471
 Potemka, 164
 Powell, 444, 463
 Praxiteles, 65
 Prescott, W. H., 312, 386
 Priestley, 483
 Prince, T., 15
 Prior, Mat., 18, 251, 255,
 325, 412, 484
 Procopius, 56
 Procter, B. W., 70, 178,
 241, 348, 384
 Propertius, 356
 Protestant, Was Shakspeare
 a ? 200 sq.
 Pygmalion, 70
 Pyrrhus, 183

 Quevedo, 178
 Quin, 457, 463
 Quincey, T. de, 8, 77, 99,
 198, 242, 308, 323, 451,
 488

 Racine, 16, 18, 20, 52, 141
 191, 246, 332, 349, 419
 Raffaele, 99
 Raikes, T., 184
 Ramsay, Dean, 222, 255
 Ranting players, 441 sq.
 Reade, C., 50, 89, 90, 111,
 112, 113, 135, 148, 161,
 171, 179, 195, 213, 236,
 250, 317, 321, 369, 437,
 457
 Reed, H., 92, 365, 400,
 403
 Religious creed of Shak-
 speare, 201 sq.
 Retzsch, 395
 Richard I., 49
 Richard II., 182
 Richard III., 239, 358, 442
 Richardson, S., 179, 245,
 315
 Richter, J. P. F., 295, 405-6,
 406
 Riddell, Mrs. J. H., 135
 Robertson, F. W., 67, 296
 Robespierre, 311
 Robinson, H. C., 97, 207,
 272, 347, 398, 464
 Rochefoucauld, La, 353
 Roderick, 93, 94

- Rogers, S., 152, 308, 310, 415
 Romeo, 175 sq.
 Roscoe, W. C., 388, 429, 453
 Rosencrantz, 413, 416
 Rötischer, 80
 Rousseau, J. J., 148, 151, 160, 246, 274, 339, 419
 Rowe, 143
 Rushton, W. L., 267
 Ruskin, J., 328, 380
 Ruyter, De, 255

 Sage, Le, 406
 Saint-Just, 312
 Sainte-Beuve, C. A., 17, 77, 201, 219, 277, 419, 435, 467
 Sala, G. A., 216, 236, 467
 Salvator Roca, 337
 Sancho Panza, 218, 223, 310, 410
 Sand, G., 122, 469
 Sanderson, Bp., 196
 Sandwich, Lord, 292
 'Saturday Review,' 66, 158, 221, 229, 280, 325, 348, 370, 391, 430, 438, 488
 Sceptic, Was Shakspeare a? 205
 Scharling, 290
 Schiller, 44, 78, 106, 128, 131, 246, 255, 274, 287, 419, 476, 488
 Schlegel, A. W., 45, 73, 83, 201, 296, 361, 418, 426, 435, 453
 Schlegel, F., 477
 Schlipper, 391
 Schönbein, 30
 Scott, Michael, 96
 Scott, Sir Walter, 21, 26, 30, 35, 47, 58, 69, 84, 90, 102, 103, 104, 110, 111, 119, 136, 142, 155, 170, 179, 187, 195, 198, 199, 214, 222, 224, 225, 227, 243, 244, 257, 283, 300, 307, 313, 316, 317, 324, 330, 335, 337, 357, 385, 388, 389, 408, 409, 410, 414, 451, 478, 479
 Scribe, 462, 467
 Scudéry, 25
 Seafield, 376
 Selden, 278

 Seneca, 128, 273
 Senior, W. N., 74, 84, 187, 330, 349, 426, 464
 Shaftesbury, 82, 88, 207, 321, 329, 415, 420
 Shakspeare, 9 sq., 14, 20, 21, 22, 28, 32, 23, 44, 45, 47, 54, 55, 57, 64, 74, 93, 95, 97, 101, 107, 108, 116, 117, 121, 122, 125, 127, 129, 132, 139, 140, 141, 147, 150, 155, 166, 173, 176, 177, 183, 189, 211, 215, 233, 238, 239, 247, 253, 254, 262, 269, 272, 273, 276, 281, 282, 287, 294, 300, 301, 316, 328, 331, 332, 334, 335, 336, 357, 362, 394, 397, 403, 404, 405, 408, 413, 449, 455, 456, 467, 472, 473, 484
 Shakspeare's ethical standpoint, 206 sq.
 Shakspeare's individuality of portraiture, 416 sq.
 Shakspeare's religious creed 200 sq.
 Shakspeare's 'scepticism,' 205
 Sheffield, 127
 Sheil, R. L., 323
 Shelley, P. B., 130, 241, 283, 422, 486
 Sheridan, R. B., 250, 335, 474
 Shirley, 131, 138, 450
 Siddons, Mrs., 67, 322, 456, 457, 463, 464
 Sidney, Sir P., 320
 Slovens, 305 sq.
 Smith, Adam, 406, 450
 Smith, Assheton, 48
 Smith, Horace, 30, 131
 Smith, Sydney, 308, 323
 Smollett, 22, 26, 48, 160, 161, 237, 246, 281, 442, 466
 Snell, 320
 Sophocles, 80, 82
 Sorcery, 95 sq.
 Soulie, F., 37, 90, 480
 South, R., 213, 305, 472
 Southey, R., 16, 36, 145, 163, 194, 279, 281
 Spanish drama, 80 sq.
 Spenser, 109, 168, 287, 473

 Spider in cup, 47 sq.
 Staël, M^{de}. de, 16, 340, 467
 Stage banquets, 216
 Stage emotion, 456 sq.
 Stage tears, 454 sq.
 Stanhope, Earl, 288, 292
 Statue scene in *Winter's Tale*, 62 sq.
 Steevens, 367, 457
 Stephen, Leslie, 476
 Stephen, Sir J., 326
 Sterne, 23, 89, 300, 329
 Story, R., 376
 Stowe, Mrs. H. B., 58, 174, 238
 Strachey, 357
 Stuart, Chas. Edwd., 109
 Stuart, Mary, 97, 98, 106, 143, 291, 335, 411
 Sully, 309
 Swift, 5, 8, 41, 42, 150, 163, 172, 187, 217, 248, 256, 328, 332, 366
 Symonds, 337
 Syrus, 405

 Tailor makes the man, The, 299 sq.
 Taine, H., 207, 328, 432
 Talfourd, 145, 277
 Talma, 391-2, 462, 463
 Tam o' the Cowgate, 101
 Tantalizing table-talk, 210 sq.
 Tantalus, 210
 Tasso, 134, 308, 320
 Tatian, 140
 Taylor, Sir H., 124
 Taylor, Jeremy, 143
 Tears, Stage, 454 sq.
 Teeth, Display of, 247 sq.
 Tennant, S., 307
 Tennyson, 41, 71, 91, 115, 204, 244, 301, 402, 406, 482
 Terence, 15, 34, 35, 55, 56, 122, 167, 177, 219, 240, 319, 335, 405, 409
 Thackeray, Miss, 279
 Thackeray, W. M., 5, 12, 24, 58, 86, 114, 134, 137, 230, 243, 252, 276, 284, 301, 314, 400
 Theganus, 251
 Theodoret, 411
 Thomson, 68, 327
 Ticknor, G., 243

- Tieck, 261, 353, 374, 378,
 387, 395, 449, 484
 Tobin, 51, 71, 106, 170,
 179, 189
 Tocqueville, A. de, 277,
 283
 Townley, J., 215
 Trench, Mrs. R., 415
 Trench, R. C., 209, 268,
 288
 Trollope Ant., 23, 42, 134,
 167, 196, 242, 248, 252,
 279, 283, 298, 302, 324,
 383, 408
 Tusser, T., 194
 Tytler, P. F., 97
 Urbain Grandier, 102
 Urfé, D', 235, 338
 Valentinian, 118
 Vanbrugh, 438
 Vandenhoff, G., 465
 Varthema, 214
 Vasari, 68
 'Veluti in Speculum,' 438,
 439
 Verges, 6, 9, 13
 Vergniaud, 411
 Vigny, A. de, 76
 Villani, 411
 Villemain, 88, 344, 355,
 366
 Vinet, Alex., 86
 Virgil, 180, 413
 Volkov, 338
 Voltaire, 86, 178, 321, 338,
 339, 347, 386, 442, 456,
 462
 Wakeman, Sir G., 186
 Walker, T., 269
 Walpole, Horace, 277, 278,
 279, 306
 Walpole, Sir Robt., 102
 Walsingham, 292
 Walton, Izaak, 196, 241
 Warburton, 125
 Ward, J., 150
 Warton, J., 176
 Washington, 199, 234, 292-3
 Watchmen, 6, 28 sq.
 Wax-work, 67
 Webster, D., 309
 Webster, J., 95, 211, 242
 Wellington, 9, 293
 Wesley, J., 305
 Whately, R., 164, 289, 420
 Whately, T., 426
 White, J., 36
 White, R. Grant, 60, 87,
 96, 114, 126, 259, 356,
 377, 397, 432
 Whitefield, G., 305, 337
 Whitney, Mrs., 480
 Wieland, 420
 Wigan, A., 437
 Wilberforce, E., 348
 William III., 475, 483
 Wilson, D., 18
 Wilson, John, 60, 93, 240,
 301, 379, 385, 392
 Wilson, Sir Robt., 237
 Winslow, Forbes, 377
 Witchcraft, Othello's only,
 92 sq.
 Wolcot, 29
 Wolff, J. C., 319
 Wordsworth, Bp. (Chas.),
 209
 Wordsworth, Wm., 6, 87
 144, 199, 308
 Wortley Montagu, Lady
 M., 462
 Wutike, 19
 Wynter, A., 309
 Wyntoun, 18
 Xenophon, 408
 Yates, E., 58, 144, 321
 286, 478
 Yonge, C. M., 157
 Young, C., 462
 Young, E., 487
 Zaire, 86
 Zeluco, 46, 450
 Zhukovsky, 338

